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DOWNRANGE REUNION

Civilian dad joins his deployed son in Afghanistan

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

TACTICAL BASE GAMBERI, Afghanistan — Children sometimes follow in their parents' footsteps, but it's not often that a father follows his son to Afghanistan.

Army 1st Lt. Spencer Weiss first heard his father was headed to Afghanistan while serving as a platoon leader at Camp Dwyer in the country's southern Helmand province.

This fall, his father, Tom Weiss, took a job as a Defense Department civilian at Bagram Air Field. The two met up last weekend at this tactical base in southeastern Afghanistan.

"Actually — at first, I thought he was having a midlife crisis," Spencer Weiss, 30, said.

"Oh," his 60-year-old father interjected. "I already had that."

"Then I thought, 'This is pretty cool. I get to actually see him,'" the son said.

SEE REUNION ON PAGE 3

Army 1st Lt. Spencer Weiss, 30, and his father, Tom Weiss, 60, a Defense Department civilian, meet Saturday at Tactical Base Gamberi in Afghanistan. Both arrived in Afghanistan this year.

J.P. LAWRENCE/Stars and Stripes

GAO: Navy has improved in Japan, but sailors still working 100-hour weeks

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Navy crews in Japan have seen a drastic improvement in training certification numbers, but some sailors report no change to heavy workloads cited last year as a contributing factor in two deadly ship collisions, according to a Government Accountability Office report.

The report, published last month, said the Navy in Japan had "improved markedly" the number of surface ship crews with lapsed training certifications

over the past year.

In September 2017, about 41 percent of guided-missile cruisers and destroyers based in Japan were operating despite expired certifications. As of November, that number was down to 3 percent.

These certifications are given in crucial areas such as damage control, surface warfare and navigation once crews complete required trainings and meet qualifications for their rates. They signify that a ship's crew has met Navy standards and is ready to deploy.

SEE NAVY ON PAGE 4



An aviation boatswain's mate directs an aircraft on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan in the Philippine Sea on Sept. 20.

KENNETH ABBATE
Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

MILITARY

Sergeant receives Army heroism award

Associated Press

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — A Fort Bragg sergeant has received the Army's highest award for heroism outside combat for his rescue of a driver from a car that was on fire.

The Fayetteville Observer reported that Sgt. 1st Class Erik Kingsley received the Soldier's Medal for Heroism during a ceremony at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.

Kingsley was driving to Raleigh-Durham International Airport about 3:30 a.m. April 1, 2017, when he saw the headlights of a vehicle in a ditch and sparks underneath.

He pulled the driver from the burning car just seconds before the vehicle exploded.

Maj. Gen. Kurt Sonntag gave the award to Kingsley, saying the sergeant is a hero and a standard for other soldiers to meet.

Correction

A Dec. 18 article about an Okinawa-based Marine sentenced to six years in prison for sexual assault and sexual harassment should have said Cpl. Jose Araujo Jr. was found guilty of sexually harassing two Marines. The article also should have said a Marine who accused Araujo of rape was assigned to 3rd Marine Logistics Group.

Japan OKs new defense guidelines

By HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance is more important than ever for Japan's national security as challenges with China, cybersecurity and elsewhere continue to evolve, according to new defense guidelines approved Tuesday by the Cabinet.

The "severity and uncertainty" of these challenges "is increasing with extremely high speed," said the National Defense Program Guideline, which sets guidance for Japan's defense strategy.

This is the second guideline revision under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe since 2013.

To counter increased military operations by China near East China Sea islands claimed by both nations, the guideline also supports converting an Izumo-class flat-top helicopter destroyer to accommodate F-35B stealth fighters. Japan plans to acquire 42 of the short takeoff and vertical-landing aircraft in the next 10 years.

The guideline calls for turning the self-defense forces' attention to threats posed to the nation's cybersecurity and from space. It also re-emphasizes the U.S.-Japan alliance as vital to Japan's national security.

"To further strengthen relations with the U.S., which shares the same universal values and strategic interests with our country, has become important more than ever for our national security," the guideline stated.

Japan will actively support U.S. military operations, such as defending U.S. ships and aircraft, according to the guideline. For example, a recent change to Japanese law allows its self-defense forces to provide logistical support to U.S. forces.

Japan needs to quickly build a new defense capability that promotes the integration of conventional ground, sea and air defenses with new areas of space and cyber, according to the revised guideline.

"Rapid expansion of new areas, such as space, cyber and electromagnetic waves, is fundamentally changing the ideal state of national security, which had placed importance on dealing with physical areas such as land,



BENJAMIN STRATTON/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

A ceremony at Misawa Air Base, Japan, welcomes the first operational F-35A Lightning II to the Japan Air Self-Defense Force's 3rd Air Wing in February.

sea and air," it stated.

The guideline also calls for all three self-defense forces to jointly address cyber defense and for the Japan Air Self-Defense Force to deal specifically with space.

Converting the Izumo carrier to handle F-35Bs will extend the self-defense forces' operational reach, defense officials said.

The only Japanese air bases — Naha Air Base and the Maritime Self-Defense Force base on Iwo Jima — have runways of 7,800 feet or longer, where conventional fighters can land. There has been frequent foreign military activity in the East China Sea and western Pacific Ocean, government officials said.

Operational flexibility will increase if short-takeoff, vertical-landing capable aircraft could operate from an Izumo-class platform when conducting air defense operations in remote areas, the official said.

Critics say reworking the helicopter destroyers will give Japan strike capability, a

violation of its pacifist constitution.

However, officials say the converted helicopter destroyer will not be used solely as a full-fledged aircraft carrier like those in the U.S. Navy. It will continue to operate as a multifunctional destroyer, playing a central role in anti-submarine warfare missions and disaster-relief operations.

The Cabinet on Tuesday also endorsed a plan to introduce 147 F-35s, and called for streamlining the self-defense forces, citing the country's declining workforce and population and its struggling economy.

The Cabinet also approved the Mid-Term Defense Program, which specifies equipment to be acquired over the next five years. It said total spending will be a record \$240 billion, which is about \$17.8 billion more than in an earlier defense budget, according to The Associated Press.

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MILITARY

More border troops return to their home base

By ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Another 1,000 active-duty servicemembers have returned to their home bases from a deployment to the southwest border of the United States, bringing the number of troops on the ground there to roughly 3,150, Pentagon officials announced Monday.

There are 1,050 servicemem-

bers in Texas, 900 in Arizona and 1,200 in California working with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, said Col. Rob Manning, a Pentagon spokesman. The reduction of active-duty forces along the southern border began last week when about 750 servicemembers began returning to their home bases. The Defense Department has not announced which units have returned to which installations.

The deployment to the U.S.-Mexico border began Oct. 31 and was intended to last through Dec. 15. With numbers peaking at 5,900, it's unclear how many troops will remain through the extended mission scheduled to end Jan. 31. The original intention was to "harden" and protect the border as a caravan of Central American migrants traveled through Mexico to seek asylum in the United States.

The military will continue providing engineering and military police force protection at designated ports-of-entry in California and Arizona, but drawdown most forces in Texas, officials at U.S. Army North said.

About 2,300 National Guard soldiers are also deployed to the border to support a separate mission with Border Patrol agents.

During the deployment, military engineers have placed about

70 miles of wire obstacles and movable barriers at 22 ports, military police units have conducted more than 10,000 hours of unit training and combined rehearsals with Border Patrol agents and military rotary wing aviators have flown more than 740 hours, officials at U.S. Northern Command posted to Twitter.

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PHOTOS BY AYA ICHIHASHI/Stars and Stripes

Help Oki, a group founded by former Marine Christopher Nesbitt and his wife, Yuko, threw a Christmas party for nearly 80 Okinawan orphans Sunday.

Retired Marine's mission: Help the needy

By AYA ICHIHASHI

Stars and Stripes

NAHA CITY, Okinawa — A group founded by a retired Marine and his wife collects thousands of pounds of food and hundreds of toys each year for Okinawans who would otherwise go without during the holidays.

Christopher and Yuko Nesbitt founded Help Oki in 2014. Christopher, a New Jersey native who retired as a sergeant that year from the 3rd Marine Division's Headquarters Battalion at Camp Courtney, made his home here with his wife, who's from the island.

He said a chance meeting with a homeless man at an apartment complex in Naha had a great impact on him. The Nesbitts spotted the man digging through some trash on a cold, rainy day. Christopher Nesbitt choked back tears remembering what happened.

The man had only a flip-flop on one foot and the other was bare, Nesbitt said. "I offered him my shoes I was wearing and the money I had with me. I had to do something for him."

The incident, Nesbitt said, changed his life and inspired him to help the less fortunate.

Not many organizations worked directly with local communities in need at the time, he told Stars



Former Marine Christopher Nesbitt and his wife, Yuko, founded the group Help Oki.

and Stripes. So he founded one of his own.

"I really wanted to help [those] who were less fortunate," he said, "like the homeless guy."

Help Oki donates between 1,100 and more than a ton of food to local food banks each month, said Tiffany Tuckett, an Air Force spouse who serves as Help Oki's food-donation coordinator. Donations come from U.S. servicemembers and Okinawans.

The Girl Scouts of Camp Courtney and Camp McFureous recently collected 1.2 tons of rice, canned goods, cereal and other

nonperishable items that Help Oki forwarded to Food Bank Second Harvest, Tuckett said. Nesbitt drove to Naha on Dec. 6 in a rented a truck to donate the items.

Another pair of volunteers, Marine Staff Sgt. Austin DeMoney and his wife, Tiffany, last year collected more than 460 toys for Help Oki, a figure they more than matched this year with 650 toys. But they're leaving Okinawa this month for a new assignment.

"I am so happy that we finished collecting the toys ... before we leave the island," Tiffany DeMoney said. "Hopefully someone will take on this great project."

Laura Stafford and Sabrina Cicchi from the Marine Officers Spouses Club Okinawa donated toys for a Help Oki-sponsored Christmas party this month for nearly 80 orphans ranging in age from 1 to 18 years old.

"I want to make the place better than it was when I leave," Cicchi said.

Help Oki threw another holiday party Sunday for single parents and their children. The group plans to host another Saturday for disabled children.

Those interested in donating or helping can contact Help Oki via its official Facebook page: www.facebook.com/helpingokinawa/

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FROM FRONT PAGE

Tom Weiss has been a military civilian employee for a decade, but first sought to deploy to Afghanistan after reading a July Stars and Stripes article about Defense Secretary Jim Mattis' call for a surge of DOD civilians to bolster the mission there, he said.

He searched online and found an opening at Bagram that would let him negotiate a nine-month deployment instead of a year.

"My little son is here in harm's way," Tom Weiss said. "I really couldn't rationalize that I would sit here, in my perfect life, a beautiful life in Maine, and that I couldn't come out of it for nine months."

An engineer by trade, he said he hopes he can make life on the sprawling air base better for soldiers.

U.S. involvement in Afghanistan has gone on long enough that children with little memory of 9/11 have grown up to deploy here. But for the elder Weiss, the Twin Towers falling brought back memories of people he knew who were killed then, and the near-miss of his father attending a meeting at the World Trade Center the day before the attacks.

The younger Weiss was too young to understand the attacks at the time. During the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan, when older kids were raring to join the military, Spencer Weiss said he was in eighth grade and more focused on things like learning to talk to girls.

"I think I hoped, like everyone else, that we wouldn't be in this country 20 years later," Spencer Weiss said.

The artillery officer arrived here in April and served as a platoon leader with the 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment at Camp Dwyer, where he led some of the Army's first enlisted female cannon crewmembers. He later transferred to Gamberi to help advise Afghan staff officers.

It's not that uncommon for sons and daughters to have deployed to the country within the span of the 17-year war.

In congressional testimony

earlier this month, Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., nominee for leader of Central Command, said he and his son, who served as a Marine officer, have deployed twice to Afghanistan.

Other parents have deployed here alongside their own children. An Air Force senior master sergeant who works at Kandahar Air Field recently met with his son, an Army captain, at Bagram.

The Weiss pair met up at Bagram a few weeks ago, soon after the elder one arrived. They played pingpong.

The father showed his son off to his new co-workers. "This is my son!" he said to everyone.

Although they had spoken from time to time on social media, the distance and the differences between life at home and deployed, in time zones and experiences, made some things difficult to explain.

Tom Weiss worried about his son, too. Whenever he heard of an American death in Afghanistan, he wondered who had been hit, he said.

But after he arrived here, the two could bond talking about life overseas.

Spencer Weiss gave his father advice on base life, such as how to get internet overseas, and explained how living at the largest American base in the country is not exactly roughing it.

Soon, Spencer Weiss will return home and his father will be the one overseas. The son will be the one worried whenever there is bad news.

Before that happens, the two will be spending Christmas together.

On Tom Weiss' visit to see his son at Gamberi on Saturday, he swung his arms boyishly behind his back, clapping at his waist.

"He does that when he talks about his kids," Spencer Weiss said. He spent the visit introducing his visitor to his coworkers, just as his father had done earlier.

"This is my father!" he said.

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MILITARY

Services honor soldiers killed in Afghan blast

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

Sgt. Jason McClary was the driver of a military vehicle in central Afghanistan when he was hit by a roadside bomb last month that fatally wounded him and three special operations troops.

"He got the full blast," said his mother, JoLynn Maoli, Pittsburgh's KDKA reported Monday as friends gathered to remember the 24-year-old veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan. "I just took a deep breath and fell to the floor."

A funeral was held Tuesday morning for McClary, who died of his wounds on Dec. 2 at a military hospital in Germany. Burial with full military honors would follow at the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies. His was the second funeral this week for a soldier killed by the blast, the deadliest attack on U.S. forces in Afghanistan this year.

Friends, family and others gathered to remember him at his hometown church on Monday ahead of the funeral.

"This is a very sad day," Frank Persia of American Legion Post 711 told KDKA. "It's just a heartache."

Some, like Cheryl Staubauch, came out to show support for the family of a "local boy."

"He sacrificed it all, he sacrificed it for all of us," she told the local television station. "He took that step for his country to keep us free."

Also on Monday, 900 people gathered at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Glen Allen, Va., for the funeral of Green Beret Capt. Andrew P. Ross, media reports said. Ross died of his wounds on Nov. 27, the day of the blast that also killed Army Sgt. 1st Class Eric Michael Emond and Air Force Staff Sgt. Dylan J. Elchin.

A memorial service for Emond was held Saturday in Southern Pines, N.C., according to the University of Massachusetts Medical School, where his father-in-law, Barry Feldman, is an assistant professor of psychiatry.

Emond, who was on his seventh deployment, was a "consummate soldier who aimed ... to make a positive impact in the world," Feldman said in a university release.

The Green Beret began his more than two decades of service in the Marines and later helped found a veterans nonprofit in Boston. He will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in January, the release said.

Family and friends raised more than \$20,000 online earlier this month for his surviving wife Allie and three young daughters.

A Virginia native, Ross is expected to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery on Jan. 8.

The U.S. Military Academy

graduate "went in with his eyes wide open and understanding that his job was dangerous and difficult," said David Miller, one of his former teachers and a family friend, Richmond's 8News reported. "Doesn't make it any easier for any of us that this happened."

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam ordered flags to be flown half-staff in Ross' honor on Monday.

On Tuesday, flags were lowered to half-staff in McClary's honor throughout Colorado, where McClary was stationed with the 4th Infantry Division's 1st Stryker Brigade at Fort Carson, by order of Gov. John Hickenlooper.

McClary was one of three soldiers injured in the blast who had been medically evacuated to Germany, where his wife spent time with him in his final moments. She told Pittsburgh's WXPJ that he had suffered a massive stroke from the explosion.

He was the second servicemember from Pennsylvania to die while serving in Afghanistan in recent weeks. Elchin, a member of the 26th Special Tactics Squadron at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., also hailed from the state.

Elchin was remembered in a hometown ceremony earlier this month and is expected to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Members of his squadron also built a makeshift Viking long ship, complete with a dragon's head on the bow, and gathered to ignite a pyre in his honor. Video of the ceremony was posted on the social media platform Reddit about two weeks ago.

McClary, a father of two, had earned two Purple Hearts and three Army Commendation Medals while serving in the Army since January 2014.

Over the weekend, his wife said on Facebook that longtime friends on their back home organized a hockey game to benefit their two young sons.

"I know I didn't cry when I was there not even an hour ago, but I saved it for when I got home," she wrote.

McClary had been a leader of the conventional infantry troops known as "uplift" that support Special Forces teams, said Richard Hass in a Facebook post earlier this month. Hass, who is a master sergeant with 1st Special Forces Group, according to the Green Beret Foundation, said he served in Afghanistan with McClary, who he dubbed "Larry."

"Larry could always be counted on to volunteer, ask questions ... and have a smile on his face," Hass wrote, saying that the young soldier had a never-quit attitude. "Make [Sgt.] McClary known and never forget his and the [others'] sacrifice."

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Air Force identifies airman's son, 8, killed in car crash

By BRIAN FERGUSON
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — The 8-year-old boy from Spangdahlem Air Base who died following a car crash Saturday has been identified as Gavyn Sanford, son of Staff Sgt. Latora Sanford and Gene Sanford.

Gene Sanford suffered major injuries in the crash but is in stable condition at Wittich hospital, an Air Force statement said Tuesday.

Latora Sanford, of the 52nd Operations Support Squadron, and her other son, Grayson, suffered minor injuries.

A GoFundMe site to help the family had raised more than \$17,000 by Tuesday afternoon.



Gavyn Sanford

Many of the comments on the site showed deep affection for Gavyn and the family.

"Gavyn was one of my son's best friends," Krizia Correa wrote. "We are so sorry for your loss. You and your family are in our thoughts and prayers."

"Your family has been weigh-

ing heavy on my heart ever since I heard the news," Shannon Williams wrote. "As a parent, it's hard to understand the heartache you are going through, but I hope it brings you some peace and joy knowing Gavyn was loved and cared about by so many people. Lellani lost a dear friend."

The cause of the crash is under investigation, Bitburg police spokesman Otmar Kaufmann said Monday.

It appears the car drove off the A60 autobahn at a curve and overturned several times at an embankment, he said. A truck driver at the scene called police to report the crash at 11:58 p.m. Saturday. Gavyn was pronounced dead at the scene early Sunday.

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Navy: Sailor exhaustion cited as ongoing issue

FROM FRONT PAGE

After three ships based in Japan were involved in collisions last year — two of which killed a total of 17 sailors — the Navy made it more difficult to issue waivers to allow ships to operate on lapsed training certifications. A new policy requires multiple, high-level officials to approve a waiver.

The waiver change was among several other steps — including revised scheduling schedules and improved training and standards — implemented over the past year to prevent future crashes. Post-collision reports attributed inadequate training and lack of sleep for crews as contributing factors in the fatal wrecks, which experts said were preventable.

John Pendleton, director of Defense Capabilities and Management for the GAO, testified at a congressional hearing on Navy and Marine Corps readiness last week about his findings from a recent visit to Japan. He attributed the improvement from the "alarming rate" of waivers to the implementation of the Afloat Training Group Western Pacific.

The Navy has [increased certification numbers] by pouring resources into what's called the Afloat Training Group, and that means that folks are going out and working with the ship crews to make sure that they're trained and certified before they deploy," Pendleton said at the hearing.

The ATGW oversees maintenance, training and certification for the Navy's ships in the Pacific. It was launched this year in Yok-



"I'm concerned that this reveals an underlying problem still facing the Navy — that it simply is not putting enough sailors on the ships to cover the workload."

John Pendleton
director of Defense Capabilities and Management for the GAO

suka to have an on-site team dedicated to working closely with ship commanders to ensure ship and crew standards are met.

While the renewed emphasis on training addressed one causal factor identified in the collision reports, Pendleton said it did little to improve another factor: sailor exhaustion.

"The Navy has stepped up training to make sure that ship crews are [trained] before they [deploy] and they have committed to provide dedicated training time going forward," he told Congress. "However, this is keeping the sailors very busy."

Pendleton testified that he held 10 discussion sessions with sailors on two Yokosuka-based ships during which many reported heavy workloads and 100-hour work weeks.

"I'm concerned that this reveals an underlying problem still facing the Navy — that it simply is not putting enough sailors on

the ships to cover the workload," Pendleton said at the hearing. "We reported on this last year; the Navy is working to develop ship-manning requirements both at-sea and in-port and we eagerly await the results to those studies as I suspect a number of hard-working sailors do, as well."

But change could come, as the average sailor's workload is under examination. Congress required the Navy in the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act to work on "a comprehensive assessment" of its standard workload and to update its "policies and procedures necessary to identify the manpower necessary to execute in-port workload," Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., said at the hearing.

The assessment and updates are due to Congress in February, and Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer testified at the hearing that the deadline will be met.

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MILITARY

Army helps GIs on flight refunds

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The Army has negotiated refunds for the majority of the 250 soldiers on rotation in Europe who had bought airline tickets to go home for the holidays before learning the leave granted by their unit hadn't been approved at higher levels.

"The command and refund coordinators have been working nonstop to rectify the situation, and it is still an ongoing process," said Elisia Lukasik, a U.S. Army Europe spokeswoman.

The 4th Combat Aviation Brigade out of Fort Carson, Colo., is deployed to Europe in support of the U.S. military's effort to reinforce NATO's eastern flank. In November, many troops made vacation plans. The problem: Whatever informal operation soldiers received from their command had not cleared U.S. Army Europe.

USAREUR policy states that deployed units are not authorized ordinary leave and that special exceptions must be granted. How-



MATTHEW J. MARCELLUS/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Soldiers assigned to the 4th Aviation Regiment, 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, walk toward UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters during exercise Combined Resolve XI in Hohenfels Training Area, Germany, on Dec. 5.

ever, due to mission requirements an exception was not supportive, USAREUR determined. The troops are spread out on missions stretching from the Baltics and Poland to Germany.

To resolve the situation and ease the financial burden on soldiers, the Army assigned refund coordinators to each of the brigade's battalions to help soldiers secure refunds. There are still some unresolved cases.

"Currently, the refund coordinators are working diligently on about 50 refunds. All others have been fully refunded or a refund is expected," Lukasik said in a statement. "The command truly regrets the undue stress this has created for our soldiers and their families and will continue to work with each soldier to address their individual situation."

The 4th CAB is nearing the end of a nine-month deployment

in Europe. The rotations are part of the military's Atlantic Resolve campaign, which aims to deter potential Russian aggression against allies.

The troops are deployed at a time of heightened tensions in Europe. Russia's attack last month on three Ukrainian naval vessels in the Black Sea and subsequent capture of about 25 Ukrainian sailors prompted condemnations from the U.S.-led NATO alliance. Ukraine enacted martial law for 30 days in some parts of the country following the attack.

On Monday, Russia said it was deploying more than 10 fighter jets to Crimea, which Moscow annexed in 2014. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said the jets would be permanently stationed on the peninsula.

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Ariz. governor names McSally for McCain's seat

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Arizona's governor has named Rep. Martha McSally to replace Sen. Jon Kyl in the U.S. Senate seat that belonged to Sen. John McCain.

Republican Gov. Doug Ducey announced Tuesday that McSally will take over after Kyl's resignation becomes effective Dec. 31. McSally last month lost a race for Arizona's other Senate seat to Democratic Rep. Kyrsten Sinema.

"With her experience and long record of service, Martha is uniquely qualified to step up and fight for Arizona," Ducey said in a statement. "I thank her for taking on this significant responsibility and look forward to working with her and Senator-elect Sinema to get positive things done."

McSally will serve until the 2020 election, when voters will elect someone to serve the final two years of McCain's term.

Kyl was appointed after McCain's death from brain cancer in August. He previously served in the Senate for Arizona and had said he would only commit to serving until the end of 2018.

The appointment puts Arizona back in the political spotlight just a month after Democrats won their first statewide race in a decade. Democrats hope the state swings again in 2020 and are expected to target it both in the presidential race and the contest for McCain's seat.

U.S. Rep. Ruben Gallego, former astronaut and current gun

control advocate Mark Kelly and former Arizona Attorney General Grant Woods, who left the GOP this year, have all considered running as Democrats for the post.

The intense interest in the seat was a factor in Ducey's convoluted decisions.

‘With her experience and long record of service, Martha is uniquely qualified to step up and fight for Arizona.’

Doug Ducey
Arizona governor

By picking Kyl, Ducey dodged tough political decisions that could have complicated his own re-election bid.

McSally is a two-term congresswoman who was long considered for the Senate by the state's GOP establishment. The first female combat pilot, McSally once sued the U.S. military so she would not be required to wear a head covering while stationed in the Middle East.

She rose to the rank of colonel in the Air Force before entering politics. She got a taste for it through working for Kyl's office as a national security aide.

McSally represented a swing district in Tucson that voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016.

GAO finds big drop in VA suicide prevention efforts

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A federal investigation found the money and effort expended by the Department of Veterans Affairs on suicide prevention outreach dropped significantly in 2017 and 2018, despite it being touted by the past two VA secretaries as their top clinical priority.

Following a yearlong investigation, the Government Accountability Office reported Monday that the VA has cut back since 2016 on suicide prevention outreach. Of the \$6.2 million budget obligated for suicide prevention outreach in fiscal year 2018, the agency had spent only \$57,000, or less than 1 percent, by September. Agency officials told investigators they would end up spending a total of \$1.5 million by Oct. 1, the end of the fiscal year. The remainder, \$4.7 million, went unused.

The number of social media posts, public service announcements, billboards and radio, bus, Facebook and print advertisements declined in 2017 and 2018, as did the effort on suicide prevention month.

"VA has stated that preventing veteran suicide is its top clinical priority, yet [the Veterans Health Administration's] lack of leadership attention to its suicide prevention media outreach campaign in recent years has resulted in less outreach to veterans," the GAO report states.

Suicide among veterans is disproportionately higher than the rest of the U.S. population, with an estimated 20 veterans dying by suicide each day, according to VA data. Among veterans younger than 35, the number of suicides has increased substantially in recent years.

Rep. Tim Walz, D-Minn., the ranking Demo-

crat on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, requested the GAO investigation. He said Monday that the findings conveyed "a deeply troubling level of incompetence" by President Donald Trump's administration.

"At a time when 20 veterans a day still die by suicide, VA should be doing everything in its power to inform the public about the resources available to veterans in crisis," he said in a statement. "Unfortunately, VA has failed to do that, despite claiming the elimination of veteran suicide as its highest clinical priority."

The VA had increased its suicide prevention outreach efforts from 2013 to 2016.

Its social media posts about suicide prevention had grown to 339 in 2016. In 2017, it dropped to 157 posts. During the first 10 months of 2018, the VA posted 47 times about suicide prevention.

Starting in June 2012, the VA consistently aired suicide prevention PSAs every month, either on the television or radio. When GAO investigators looked into the issue in August 2018, the VA hadn't aired a PSA in over a year.

The agency also stopped using its budget for suicide prevention ads.

In fiscal year 2015, the VA had a suicide prevention media budget of \$4 million. With that, the agency ran 58 online advertisements and bought 30 billboards, 180 bus ads, 19,000 radio ads, 252 print ads and 39 PSAs.

Comparatively, the VA used only a small portion of its budget in fiscal year 2018 to purchase 25 online ads, 20 billboards and eight radio advertisements.

In 2017, the VA had a budget of \$1.7 million for suicide prevention and other mental health outreach. The VA spent about \$136,000, or less

than 10 percent, on suicide prevention. Also in 2017, the VA had a "limited effort" for suicide prevention month in September because they didn't prepare, the GAO found.

The VA blamed leadership vacancies for the downturn.

The position of national director for suicide prevention was vacant for nine months following the resignation of the former director, Caitlin Thompson, in July 2017. The VA hired a new director, Ketia Franklin, in April.

"Officials reported not having leadership available for a period of time to make decisions about the suicide prevention media outreach campaign," the report states. "GAO found that [VA] did not assign key leadership responsibilities or establish clear lines of reporting, and as a result, its ability to oversee the outreach campaign was hindered. Consequently, the VA may not be maximizing its reach with suicide prevention media content to veterans, especially those who are at-risk."

In a letter responding to the report, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie reassured his commitment to suicide prevention outreach.

"Every death by suicide is a tragedy, and we will not relent in our efforts to connect veterans in need with lifesaving support," the response reads.

VA officials acknowledged "organizational transitions and realignments" created confusion from mid-2017 to mid-2018, but they claimed there has since been significant improvements.

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NATION

White House tells Pentagon to form Space Command

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Tuesday directed the Pentagon to establish a new combatant command charged with overseeing all of the U.S. military's space operations across all of its branches.

Trump ordered the formation of U.S. Space Command, a four-star unified command to lead military space operations and develop the Pentagon's space warfighting plans and techniques, in a directive sent to the Defense Department. Pentagon officials said they would immediately work to build the new command, the department's 11th combatant command.

In his order, Trump charged Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to recommend leaders for Space Command. Pentagon officials said they expected such recommendations to be made within "the next several weeks," but they declined to provide names of flag officers under consideration.

"The [Defense] Department will move expeditiously to establish U.S. Space Command once a commander is appointed," said Army Lt. Col. Joe Buccino, a Pentagon spokesman.

Pentagon officials have yet to determine where Space Command will be headquartered or how quickly the new command will be fully operational, he said.

The directive had been expected. While some lawmakers have pushed back against Trump's plans to build a Space Force, a sixth branch of the military, Pentagon officials, including Mattis, have long championed the establishment of a combatant command focused on space, especially as competitor nations have advanced their own space capabilities and shown interest in using them for military purposes.

For example, China has recently displayed the ability to hit satellites with missiles, and Russia has vowed to develop space-based laser weaponry.

'A new era'

Vice President Mike Pence, in a speech Tuesday morning from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., declared "a new era of American national security in space."

He said Trump would soon sign a new space policy directive in which the administration would lay out its plans for building a Space Force. While establishing Space Command does not require congressional legislation, lawmakers would have to approve

the formation of a new military branch.

"We're working as we speak with leaders of both parties in Congress to stand up the United States Space Force by the end of 2020," Pence told airmen with the 45th Space Wing, based at Patrick Air Force Base and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.

The military has about 18,000 servicemembers and civilians working on space operations. While the Air Force has responsibility for the vast majority of the Pentagon's space operations — including operating 77 of the military's more than 100 satellites — all five branches have space programs.

It remains unclear whether the Space Force would be a fully independent branch of the military, such as the Army and Air Force, or if it would take on a form similar to the Marine Corps, which is part of the Navy Department. Pentagon officials have said they've looked at both options, including placing it within the Air Force. Ultimately, that decision would be up to Congress.

Space Force plans

Deputy Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan, in a series of tweets Tuesday, said the Pentagon was already working with Congress to develop plans for Space Force.

He wrote that Space Force and Space Command will have relationships to the military services like the services now have with the four other functional combatant commands — U.S. Cyber Command, U.S. Strategic Command, U.S. Transportation Command and U.S. Special Operations Command.

"The Space Force will serve as a force provider for personnel, assets and capabilities supporting space operations, while Space Command will serve as the operational command that will employ space capabilities and lead space operations," Shanahan wrote on Twitter.

Pentagon and White House officials have not said how many personnel would be assigned to a Space Force, nor have they provided detailed cost estimates.

In September, Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson estimated establishing the new military branch could cost up to \$13 billion. However, Shanahan told reporters last month that it would cost much less, saying he believed Space Force could be established at a cost below \$5 billion.

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CAROLYN KASTER/AP

President Donald Trump's former national security adviser Michael Flynn leaves federal court in Washington on Tuesday after his sentencing was postponed.

Flynn sentencing hearing abruptly postponed to allow for cooperation

By ERIC TUCKER
AND CHAD DAY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge abruptly postponed the sentencing hearing Tuesday for Michael Flynn, President Donald Trump's first national security adviser, after a stunning hearing in which the judge accused Flynn of selling out his country.

The delay allows Flynn to continue cooperating with the special counsel's Russia probe and get credit for it in his punishment. Flynn pleaded guilty last year to lying to the FBI about his Russia contacts, just days after Trump was inaugurated.

"Arguably, you sold your country out," U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan told Flynn in a tongue-lashing that raised the prospect that the judge could send the retired Army lieutenant general to prison, even though prosecutors have recommended against prison time, citing his cooperation in the Russia probe.

Sullivan told Flynn, "I can't hide my disgust, my disdain" at the crime.

After a prosecutor raised the prospect of Flynn's continued cooperation with other investigations in the future, Sullivan warned Flynn that he might not get the full credit for his assistance to the government if he were sentenced as scheduled on Tuesday. Typically, judges like to sentence cooperating defendants after their cooperation is done so they can fully evaluate the help they gave to the government.

He gave Flynn a chance to talk it over with his lawyers, and the court went into a brief recess. When they returned, Flynn lawyer Rob Kelner defended Flynn's cooperation — but requested a postponement to allow for him to keep cooperating.

Flynn, who served as national security adviser for only a few weeks, was to be the first White House official sentenced in special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into possible coordination between Russia and the Trump campaign. The hearing took place amid escalating legal peril for Trump, who was implicated by federal prosecutors in New York this

month in hush-money payments to cover up extramarital affairs. Nearly a half-dozen former aides and advisers — including Flynn — have pleaded guilty or agreed to cooperate with prosecutors.

Trump signaled his intense interest in the case by tweeting "good luck" to Flynn hours before the sentencing hearing. He added: "Will be interesting to see what he has to say, despite tremendous pressure being put on him, about Russian Collusion in our great and, obviously, highly successful political campaign. There was no Collusion!"

At the hearing, Sullivan told Flynn that he would take into account his extensive cooperation with the government, which includes 19 meetings with investigators, as well as a 33-year military career that included service in Iraq and Afghanistan. But he also said he was forced to weigh other factors, too, including Flynn's decision as national security adviser to lie to the FBI on the premises of the White House about contacts he had with the Russian ambassador to the United States.

Lawmakers negotiate wall funding after White House backs off shutdown threat

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate's top Republican and Democratic leaders began negotiating Tuesday after the White House indicated President Donald Trump does not want a federal government shutdown over his demand for \$5 billion for the border wall with Mexico.

During a meeting on Capitol Hill, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, of Kentucky, proposed \$1.6 billion for border fencing, as outlined in a bipartisan Senate bill, plus an additional \$1 billion that Trump could use on the border, according to a senior Democratic aide unauthorized to

speak about the private meeting.

Democrats are likely to reject that, the aide said, characterizing the additional \$1 billion as a "slush fund."

But the meeting between the top leaders offered the first signs of a movement after days of impasse as the clock ticks down toward Friday's funding deadline.

Without a resolution, more than 800,000 government workers could be furloughed or sent to work without pay, disrupting government operations days before the Christmas holiday.

Democratic leader Rep. Nancy Pelosi, of California, called it a "good sign" that the White House appeared to be backing off its de-

mands. Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, of New York, have proposed \$1.3 billion. That money would not be for a wall but for border fencing.

As she entered a meeting in Schumer's office, Pelosi said the "slush fund" is not acceptable. "What they might want to do with that \$1 billion dollars is problematic," Pelosi told reporters. "Right now, what they've offered, we have not accepted."

The White House showed a willingness to budge earlier Tuesday as it became apparent the president does not have support in Congress for funding the wall at the \$5 billion level he wants.

NATION

Dems fight over who owns data ahead of 2020

By BILL BARROW
Associated Press

Democratic National Committee officials and a group of state party leaders are trying to resolve an increasingly ugly dispute over how the party manages and pays for the voter data used in campaigns.

The saga, which spilled into open view in recent weeks, eventually will determine how extensive will be a voter information file will be to the Democratic presidential nominee in 2020. The fight also is testing DNC Chairman Tom Perez and his promises to rebuild trust among Democrats' national leadership, state parties and donors across the country following a 2016 campaign that left the party fractured.

DNC officials were to meet Tuesday in Washington with certain state party chairs and executive directors as the party attempts to overhaul its data operation amid widespread agreement that Democrats have been lapped by Republicans on a pillar of campaign infrastructure.

The gathering is complicated by a recent round of emails among Perez and state party chiefs, with each side effectively accusing the other of a counterproductive power grab.

"Here's the bottom line: We all want to win," Perez told The Associated Press in an interview ahead of Tuesday's private session. Yet he alluded to the obvious tensions, saying "a lot of stakeholders ... have very important equities in the process."

Perez supports creation of a data trust — a legal entity separate from the party itself — designed for the national party, state party, Democratic candidates and the left's special interest groups to share data in real time. Republicans already use a similar structure, and Democrats claimed it was an underappreciated variable in President Donald Trump's 2016 victory.

State party leaders say they also want sharable, real-time data. But they argue that could be accomplished through a co-operative managed through state parties and aided by a third-party vendor, TargetSmart, a company many state parties already use as a data contractor.

A key in both proposals is having some independent entity that could collect data from independent groups — Planned Parenthood, Sierra Club or Indivisible, for example — without running afoul of campaign finance rules that prohibit coordination between those groups and political parties or individual campaigns.

In the DNC's preferred model, the trust itself is the go-between.



JOHN MINICILLO/AP

Tom Perez, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, waits to speak at a campaign event in Cincinnati in November.

In a counterproposal advanced by Minnesota's Ken Martin, who leads the national group of state party chairmen, TargetSmart could end up being at the center.

In a weekend email to state party leaders, Perez said the states' proposal "would tear down just about everything about our current data structure, reversing so much of the progress we made over the past decade."

One state executive director, Alaska's Jay Parmley, retorted that Perez's commentary was "petty and completely unnecessary."

A key point of contention is who would control the data. Now, state parties control their own voter files, feeding it to a national voter file that the DNC pays to have analyzed and put into a form that is usable for individual campaigns. But by owning their own data, state parties get to make money selling it to candidates.

South Carolina Chairman Trav Robertson recalls serving as Oklahoma's state party executive director in lean times. "If I didn't have that revenue, I'd have had to shut it all down," he said.

National party officials insist that the trust model would ensure a source of revenue for state parties, while maintaining state control over how the data is used. That includes, for example, whether primary challengers of an incumbent Democrat could buy a state's voter file. But the details haven't been ironed out.

There's also concern from Robertson and other state chairs about who would control the trust. A co-op model would be run by the executives of the organizations involved, such as state chairs or DNC executives. The governing board of a trust would be determined by the entity's legal structure.

Both sides have raised questions about financial motives, but there would be for-profit entities involved either way — just as there are in the current data operation. The trust itself legally would be a for-profit enterprise, though Perez's team notes it would not have shareholders collecting dividends and would steer money back into party data building.

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NATION

Train kills 2 Chicago officers

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Two Chicago police officers were fatally struck by a train as they investigated a report of gunshots on the city's far South Side.

Eduardo Marmolejo, 37, and Conrad Gary, 31, were pursuing a person heading toward the train tracks when they were hit shortly after 6 p.m. Monday as the commuter train passed through the area, police Superintendent Eddie Johnson said. Police said the officers were chasing the suspect on foot.

"There was no stop at that location so the train was probably going somewhere between 60 and

It just highlights again how dangerous this job can be.'

Rahm Emanuel
Chicago mayor

70 miles per hour," Johnson said during a news conference.

Johnson said an individual was taken into custody and a weapon was recovered.

He said the investigation was still in

the early stages and that more details would be released later.

Marmolejo had been with the department for 2½ years and Gary for 18 months, Johnson said.

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who also spoke at the news conference, said the city had lost "two young men, both fathers with young families."

"There are no words that can express the grief, the sense of loss. It just knocks you back on your heels," he said.

Chicago police use ShotSpotter technology, or sensors that monitor for the sound of gunfire and alert police. Johnson said the two officers went to the scene Monday after a ShotSpotter alert went out.

"It just highlights again how dangerous this job can be. I often say that the most dangerous thing a police officer can do is take a weapon off of an armed individual," Johnson said.

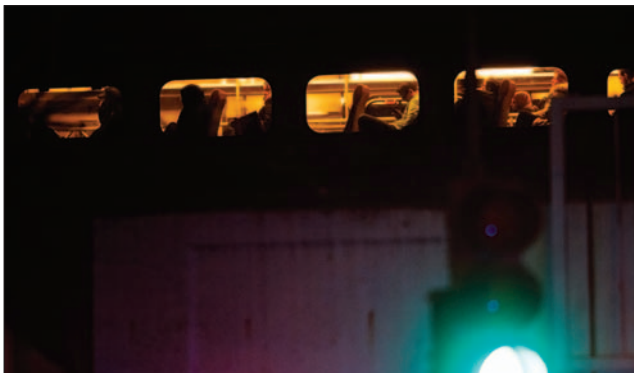
The train that struck the officers was operated by a commuter rail line that links northern Indiana and Chicago, according to media reports.

In 2002, Chicago police officer Benjamin Perez was fatally struck by a commuter train while conducting surveillance on narcotics activity on the city's West Side.



PHOTOS BY ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ, CHICAGO TRIBUNE/AP

Police investigate the scene where two officers were killed after they were struck by a South Shore train near 103rd Street and Dauphin Avenue on Monday in Chicago.



Passengers sit on the train while police officers, below, work the scene.

Two other Chicago officers besides Marmolejo and Gary have been killed in the line of duty this year.

Officer Samuel Jimenez was killed in a shootout last month after he chased a gunman inside a hospital on Chicago's South Side. The shooter also killed two other people — his ex-fiancee, who was an emergency room doctor, and a pharmacy resident — before taking his own life.

And in February, Cmdr. Paul Bauer was fatally shot while pursuing a suspect in the Loop business district.

"I think it's really important that we put our arms around this critical juncture because we are so dependent on their professionalism and their sense of duty," Emanuel said Monday night.



Settlement: 'Anti-hate training' for internet troll

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — An internet troll who harassed a black college student with racist messages on social media has agreed to a court settlement requiring him to get "anti-hate training," apologize in writing and on video and publicly renounce white supremacy.

Tuesday's settlement agreement would resolve Taylor Dumpson's claims against one of the defendants she sued in April over an online harassment campaign orchestrated by a neo-Nazi website publisher.

The "troll storm" started after she became the first black woman to serve as American University's student government president. Her suit says The Daily Stormer publisher, Andrew Anglin, directed his site's readers to cyberbully her.

Dumpson sued Anglin and two people who harassed her. Her settlement agreement is with Evan James McCarty, who posted online under a pseudonym. Anglin hasn't responded to the suit.

Va. shipyard announces buyout offers, restructuring

Associated Press

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. — The Virginia shipyard that's the sole builder of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers is offering buyouts to a little more than 10 percent of its workforce.

The Virginian-Pilot obtained a Monday letter from Newport News Shipbuilding President Jennifer Boykin that says the buyouts being offered to more than 2,500 employees are "completely voluntary," and no layoffs are expected.

The letter also indicated a forthcoming restructuring, saying the moves are necessitated by the federal government's "increasingly complex defense priorities."

Company spokesman Duane Bourne said the buyout offers are intended to cut overhead costs and apply to senior manager- and director-level employees, as well as certain other salaried employees.

The shipyard is a division of Huntington Ingalls Industries. It's also one of two yards that builds nuclear-powered submarines.

NATION

Expert: Calif. man in terror case is not an extremist

By SUDHIN THANAWALA
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A California man convicted of attempting to support Islamic State does not have the attributes of an Islamic extremist despite his discussions about making bombs and planning terror attacks, a former CIA employee who studies terror networks testified Monday.

Marc Sageman described Amer Alhagaghi at a sentencing hearing as an internet troll who talked big to get a reaction out of people and look tough, but took no real action.

"He's a fabulist. He spins tales," said Sageman, who evaluated Alhagaghi for the defense. "He wants to show that he's a mean guy, but he's really a coward. He really doesn't do anything." Alhagaghi, 23, pleaded guilty in July to creating social media accounts for ISIS supporters. Prosecutors paint a darker picture of him, saying he accessed an ISIS bomb-making manual and boasted about a series of attacks he wanted to commit on behalf of the group.

"His aim was to 'redefine terror,' and he promised that if he succeeded, the 'whole Bay Area (was) gonna be in flames,'" lawyers with the U.S. attorney's office in San Francisco said in a court filing.

They are seeking a sentence of 33 years in prison. Alhagaghi's attorneys are seeking a sentence of four years.

U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer continued the sentencing hearing to Jan. 8. He said the case was "serious."

"I don't think that I've had a sentencing as dramatic in the sense of what was done, what was said and what a potential sentence should be," he said.

Sageman, a forensic psychiatrist and counterterrorism con-



EVAN VUCCA/AP

Marc Sageman, seen in 2009, is a former CIA employee who studies terror networks. He testified Monday at a sentencing hearing for Amer Alhagaghi.

sultant, said he has conducted 50 interviews of terrorists. He said Alhagaghi was not that religious and didn't dress like an Islamic extremist or express anger with the United States like many do.

Alhagaghi told an undercover agent about plans to set fire to the Berkeley hills, poison a large number of people with strychnine and set off multiple explosions using backpacks, according to Sageman.

He told Sageman he lied to the agent and only realized what he had gotten into when the agent took him to a storage facility weeks later to show him barrels of what was supposed to be an explosive agent, Sageman said.

FBI says Fla. man posted bomb-making instructions

By CURT ANDERSON
Associated Press

MIAMI — A Florida man is facing charges of posting detailed bomb-making instructions to online sites frequented by extremists such as supporters of Islamic State, according to an FBI complaint unsealed Monday.

An FBI affidavit charges Tayaab Tahir Ismail, 33, with posting the illegal bomb instructions on at least five occasions between July and September. Ismail, of Pembroke Pines, Fla., is a naturalized U.S. citizen from Pakistan. The charge carries a maximum 20-year prison sentence if he is convicted.

The FBI said Ismail posted numerous other messages of support for ISIS and did searches on how to build bombs. There is no evidence he actually had live explosives, but there was plenty of extremist rhetoric about carrying out attacks, according to the affidavit.

"You are surrounded by methods to hit them. Kill the devil's soldiers without hesitation. Make them bleed even in their own homes," read one message Ismail is accused of sharing online. "There are plenty of methods to attack my brother."

One of the bomb-making videos Ismail allegedly shared online showed an instructor with a black scarf covering his face and wearing military fatigues. The video on how to make a bomb in a kitchen also shows a black flag in the background that the FBI said is associated with ISIS.

The FBI affidavit said explosives experts believe the bomb instructions posted by Ismail were accurate and could lead someone to build a dangerous device.

The affidavit also said Ismail was an associate of James Medina, who is serving a 25-year prison sentence for plotting to blow up a South Florida synagogue and Jewish school. The two lived together while Medina was working on his 2016 plot, which was an undercover FBI sting operation using a fake bomb.

"On the day Medina attempted to bomb the synagogue, Ismail learned of Medina's plans to move forward and conduct the attack, but he did not alert law enforcement," the affidavit says.

After Medina's arrest, Ismail surrendered several firearms at authorities' request, court documents show. But he was not charged in that case.

Second round of farm bailout payments OK'd

By JEFF STEIN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration said Monday it has approved a second round of payments in its bailout program for farmers hurt by the ongoing trade war with China.

The Agriculture Department announced in a news release that it will spend billions more through 2019 on direct cash aid to producers of soybeans, cotton, corn and several other commodities. The bulk of payments are slated for soybean farmers, after new government data showed a sharp decline in their exports to China.

This second round of payments is a portion of a broader farm bailout the Trump administration announced this summer, which the administration at the time said could spend up to \$12 billion to help farmers. USDA officials said the first emergency aid package would consist of \$4.7 billion in direct payments to farmers, while this second round of payments would bring total direct payments to farmers to \$9.6 billion.

As of Nov. 18, USDA had paid more than \$1 billion to farmers in response to more than 240,000 applications for assistance.

"Today I am making good on my promise to defend our Farmers & Ranchers from unjustified trade retaliation by foreign nations," President Donald Trump

said on Twitter. "Our economy is stronger than ever — we stand with our Farmers!"

The fate of the second round of bailout payments had been uncertain as Trump administration officials suggested it might not be necessary if trade tensions with China subsided. Bloomberg News reported earlier this month that China has resumed buying soybeans, following Chinese President Xi Jinping's meeting with Trump at the Group of 20 nations.

But signs are mounting that the trade war has sharply reduced exports of some U.S. commodities, and farming groups have criticized the bailout as insufficient to cover their losses. New data released last week by the USDA showed a decline of about 97 percent in soybean exports to China from the prior year, said Torsten Slok, chief international economist at Deutsche Bank Securities.

The three-pronged \$12 billion aid package pledged \$9.6 billion in direct cash payments to farmers, a \$1.2 billion program to purchase farm goods and distribute them to food banks, and a \$200 million program to promote exports in foreign markets. About \$7.2 billion of the \$9.6 billion cleared by the administration will go to producers of soybeans, according to an Agriculture Department news release.

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NATION

Jesuit province releases names of child abusers

By DAVID MCFADDEN
Associated Press

BALTIMORE — The Roman Catholic Jesuit province serving much of the eastern United States on Monday released the names of Jesuit priests who face “credible or established” accusations of sexual abuse of minors dating back to 1950.

In a letter, the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus identified five living Jesuits facing offenses that took place in the province and another eight who are dead. The men — part of a Catholic order that includes more than 16,000 men worldwide — served in churches, high schools, colleges and other institutions.

It’s the latest in a string of similar disclosures from Jesuit governing bodies. Earlier this month, two other Jesuit provinces that cover nearly half the U.S. released the names of more than 150 priests and other ministry leaders found to have “credible allegations” of sexual abuse made against them.

The letter from the Rev. Robert Hussey, the leader of the Jesuit province headquartered in Maryland, states that most cases date back decades, and the most recent incident occurred in 2017. The five still alive are listed as living in supervised housing “on a safety plan.” He said in the letter, dated Monday, that the province hopes the disclosure “will contribute to reconciliation and healing.”

We are deeply sorry for the harm we have caused to victims and their families,” said Hussey, whose statement was attached to the list of names and accusations.

None of the living named Jesuits are in active ministry in the grouping that extends through South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, West Virginia,

southern New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and the District of Columbia.

While some of the named Jesuit priests were removed from ministry in the 1990s, others were not removed until well after the U.S. church sex abuse scandal exploded in Boston in 2002. One accused priest, Neil McLaughlin, was not removed from ministry until 2007 despite the fact he is believed to have abused youngsters from his ordination in 1959 until the 1980s, with multiple accusations of abuse from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Georgia, New York and Massachusetts.

Another Jesuit priest, J. Glenn Murray, was removed from ministry in 2011, decades after he was accused of a single allegation of sex abuse in Baltimore dating from 1981, a few years after his ordination.

David Lorenz, a clergy sex abuse survivor who leads the Maryland chapter of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, or SNAP, said he was glad the Jesuits were putting out a list of abusers so some victims could get some relief and move ahead in their lives.

But he stressed that the list was “wholly inadequate,” in his view, and the only way to get all the information about church abuse was through subpoenas by independent investigators.

“Unless you force them to open up their records, you can’t believe that what they’re giving you is complete,” Lorenz said in a phone interview Monday.

The Jesuits have previously settled lawsuits across the country, including a \$166 million settlement involving about 500 abuse claims in Oregon in 2011, one of the largest settlements involving clergy abuse allegations.



KENT PORTER, THE (SANTA ROSE, CALIF.) PRESS DEMOCRAT/AP

Large waves crash ashore at Duncan’s Landing north of Bodega Bay, Calif., on Monday as a large swell train arrives on the Sonoma Coast.

Giant waves slam Calif. coast

By IAN LIVINGSTON
The Washington Post

A series of storm systems driven by persistent low pressure near Alaska is churning waves to dangerous levels along the West Coast of the United States.

The focus of the punishment from massive waves is from southern Washington state through central California. The San Francisco Bay Area is one region taking the brunt, with waves that were expected to reach 30 to 40 feet in height through Tuesday. It’s even been enough to postpone a surfing competition.

This event is huge and truly affecting the whole West Coast. High surf warnings extend from north of the Oregon and Wash-

ington border to about a two-hour drive north of Los Angeles. High surf advisories or gale warnings stretch from Canada to the Mexico border.

“The dramatic wave heights are related to a consistent fetch of wind action that ... has origins up near Alaska,” wrote Marshall Shepherd, professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Georgia, for Forbes.

The cause of the widespread and life-threatening breakers along the West Coast is this massive upper-level low pressure complex spinning around the Gulf of Alaska.

The gigantic gyre is blasting storm after storm at the West Coast. It’s also fostering ideal conditions for strong winds to blow

over hundreds of miles of ocean, virtually unaltered, which pile up mammoth waves in the process.

Expectations are for conditions so extreme that the National Weather Service in the San Francisco Bay tweeted, “STAY WELL BACK FROM THE OCEAN OR RISK CERTAIN DEATH.”

The urgency highlights the unusual risk posed by this round of megaswells.

No major change in the pattern that is bringing this storminess ashore is expected in the short term, but the current intensity of the Alaskan low should wane in the days ahead. While large waves were expected for parts of the West Coast beyond Tuesday, the danger should be somewhat mitigated after that point.

Conservation groups sue to block oil production plan in Alaskan sea

By DAN JOLING
Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Five conservation groups filed a lawsuit Monday seeking to block oil production from a proposed artificial gravel island in federal Arctic waters.

The groups asked the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to review an offshore production plan approved for the Liberty project in the Beaufort Sea off Alaska’s north coast.

The groups said the plan violates federal law governing other continental shelf drilling, the environment and endangered species. The Trump administration failed to consider impacts of an oil spill in remote Arctic waters or the effects of drilling on polar bears and other endangered species, said Kristen Monsell, of the

Center for Biological Diversity, one of the groups that sued.

“An oil spill in the Arctic would be impossible to clean up in a region already stressed by climate change,” she said.

Drilling law requires the administration to reject development if the risks to the human and marine environments outweigh the benefits of oil extraction. That includes both spills and climate change, Monsell said.

“Here, the agency used the totally inadequate analysis that actually found that the ‘no action’ alternative — not approving the project — would actually result in more greenhouse gas emissions, which is just completely ridiculous on its face and also ridiculous given the modeling they used,” Monsell said.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management did not immediately

respond to an email request for comment Monday.

BOEM in October approved a plan submitted by Houston-based Hilcorp for production wells on an island proposed in 19 feet of water about 5.6 miles off shore.

The site is 15 miles east of Prudhoe Bay, North America’s largest oil field.

Hilcorp plans to extract oil from federal leases sold in the 1990s. BP Exploration Alaska drilled at the site in 1997 and sold 50 percent of the assets to Hilcorp in 2014.

The base of the gravel island would cover 24 acres of ocean floor, about the size of 18 football fields, with sloped sides leading to a work surface of 9 acres.

To create the island, trucks would travel by ice road to a hole cut in sea ice and deposit 83,000 cubic yards of gravel. The surface would have room for 16 wells.

Utah couple accused of waterboarding daughter

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — A Utah couple is accused of waterboarding their daughter, 9, as a form of punishment.

The girl told police that her father and stepmother tied her hands and then placed a towel over her face, held her down in a bathtub and poured water on the towel, according to a probable cause statement filed by police last week.

The girl said she couldn’t breathe during the waterboarding that occurred three times in their home in Provo, about 45 miles south of Salt Lake City.

She also said she suffered other abuse, including being slapped by her stepmother in the face, causing a nosebleed, the documents show.

The couple was booked into jail last week on suspicion of child abuse. They have posted bail and have yet to be charged.

The Associated Press isn’t identifying the father or stepmother to protect the girl’s identity.

The investigation began Dec. 3 following a report from child welfare workers. The court document doesn’t say how the workers became aware of the abuse.

NATION

Asylum seekers stake claims on US soil at border

By MOISES CASTILLO

Associated Press

TIJUANA, Mexico — Several asylum seekers, joined by two members of the U.S. Congress, waited on a small patch of U.S. soil for hours demanding that their claims be processed immediately, challenging a U.S. policy to make people wait in Mexico if there are capacity constraints.

The 21 Honduran asylum seekers camped on U.S. soil at San Diego's Otay Mesa port of entry, with the official border separating the U.S. and Mexico to the south and U.S. inspection booths to the north, said Nicole Ramos, an attorney at Al Otro Lado, a legal services organization working on behalf of the migrants. The official border marker generally goes unnoticed by people walking toward inspectors.

By Monday night, U.S. Customs and Border Protection agreed to process eight unaccompanied children, one mother with five children and one man, Ramos said. But a family of five and one man continued to wait on the small piece of U.S. soil, backed by the presence of U.S. Reps. Nanette Barragan and Jimmy Gomez, both California Democrats.

"Children are sick, they're crying, they've had to use the bathroom," said Ramos. "We've had to get blankets and food for them."

CBP did not comment on the status of the 21 asylum seekers but officials said claims are processed as quickly as possible.

The impasse highlights a U.S. practice to limit entry for asylum seekers at official crossings when they are at full capacity, which it calls "metering" or "queue man-

agement." Authorities emphatically deny they are turning away asylum seekers — prohibited under U.S. and international law — and say they are simply asking them to temporarily wait in Mexico.

CBP says a surge in asylum claims has strained resources. The number of people expressing fear of returning to their home countries — the initial step toward asylum — jumped 67 percent at the U.S. border with Mexico in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30 to 92,959 claims from 55,584 the previous year.

Critics contend that CBP is limiting the number of asylum claims to deter people from coming.

In San Diego, U.S. authorities funnel asylum claims through the San Ysidro port of entry, the nation's busiest crossing. Asylum seekers themselves manage waiting

lists in a tattered notebook on the Tijuana side.

The wait at the San Ysidro crossing neared 3,000 names even before a caravan of more than 6,000 people reached the border city last month.

The San Ysidro crossing typically processes 60 to 100 asylum claims a day, meaning many will likely have to wait in Tijuana for months.

People who appear at the city's other crossing, Otay Mesa, are directed to San Ysidro before they reach U.S. soil. But Monday's crowd managed to reach U.S. soil, according to Ramos, which usually means they are transferred to San Ysidro to have their claims processed immediately.

Ramos said the 21 Hondurans who sought asylum were at heightened risk for staying in Mexico.

Deported immigrants get their last flight on 'ICE Air'

By NOMAAN MERCHANT
AND ANGELIKI KASTANIS

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Shackled at their ankles and wrists and their shoelaces removed, a long line of men and women waited on the tarmac as a team of officers patted them down and checked inside their mouths for anything hidden.

Then one by one, they climbed onto a mobile staircase and onto a charter plane the size of a commercial aircraft.

This was a deportation flight run by ICE Air. The chains would be removed and the shoelaces returned when the plane landed in El Salvador.

An obscure division of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement operates hundreds of flights each year to remove immigrants. Deportation flights are big business: The U.S. government has spent approximately \$1 billion on them in the last decade, and the Trump administration is seeking to raise ICE's budget for charter flights by 30 percent.

ICE Air Operations transports detained immigrants between American cities and, for those with final removal orders, back to their home countries. About 100,000 people a year are deported on such flights.

While Mexican immigrants are generally flown to southern U.S. cities and then driven to the border so they can cross over, Central Americans have to be transported by air. And the large numbers of Mexicans who used to cross the border have largely been replaced by migrants from three impoverished Central American countries: El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

According to flight-tracking data, deportation flights to Guatemala and Honduras have sharply increased this year. And ICE's budget request for charter flights increased 30 percent last year compared to the year before.

The agency estimated last year that it spends about \$7,785 per hour on the flights.

ICE shifted to chartering private planes about a decade ago after previously using a govern-



PHOTOS BY DAVID J. PHILLIPS/AP

Immigrants who entered the United States illegally are deported on a flight to El Salvador by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Houston in November.



Restraints lie on the tarmac as personal belongings of immigrants who entered the United States illegally are loaded onto a plane for a deportation flight to El Salvador.

ment service with the U.S. Marshals. The agency says moving to private flights saves about \$25 million a year and gave it more flexibility. Charter flights also avoid putting large numbers of deported immigrants on com-

mercial planes, which requires buying tickets for deportation officers accompanying them, or holding them in the U.S. for longer than necessary and tying up space in detention centers.

"I don't want to elongate any-

body's detention with us," said Pat Contreras, director of enforcement and removal for ICE's Houston field office. "If a judge says you need to be removed, we should be expeditiously working to execute that order so that person does not spend any longer in detention than necessary."

But migrant advocacy groups say ICE Air is an example of how tougher immigration enforcement — from detention to tracking to removal — enriches private companies.

"The way you would save money on ICE Air is by deporting fewer people, not by privatizing the industry," said Bob Libal, director of Grassroots Leadership, which opposes immigration detention.

"ICE is a largely privatized agency," Libal said. "In many ways, it's been captured by the industries that profit from deportation and detention."

The Associated Press observed a deportation flight being loaded last month at a private terminal of George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston.

The Boeing 737 had no mark-

ings suggesting it was a deportation flight. Instead, it had the insignia of Swift Air, a private company that also flies charters for political campaigns and professional sports teams, including the NHL's Boston Bruins and Chicago Blackhawks. In this case, Swift Air had been hired by Classic Air Charters, a Huntington, N.Y.-based company that won ICE's deportation flights contract last year.

Classic Air has been paid \$51 million this year by ICE, according to federal spending records. The previous contractor, CSI Aviation of New Mexico, was paid \$906 million by ICE's removals division since 2010, when ICE privatized its flights.

When the plane landed in Houston, about 30 Salvadoran immigrants were already on board, flown in from Alexandria, La., an ICE Air hub. They peered out the windows as the plane sat on the tarmac.

Two buses arrived, carrying 45 men and five women. Their few belongings were in red mesh bags that workers sorted on the tarmac.

Officers checked each detainee before letting them board, a process that took about 20 minutes.

According to the agency, 29 of the 50 people who boarded the plane in Houston had been arrested on criminal charges, including four who were wanted in El Salvador for attempted murder or homicide, the agency said.

The remaining 21 were considered non-criminal, meaning they were being deported for immigration violations. Twenty of the 50 had been deported before.

ICE would not let AP reporters view the inside of the plane, but officials said the flights are orderly and quiet. A meal is served, and a doctor is on board. But all detainees — even those considered non-criminal — remain shackled until the plane lands.

"We try and be as humane as we can with everything that we do," Contreras said. "We try to make them safe. We want to make sure that not one individual does anything wrong."

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WORLD

President Xi: China will 'never seek hegemony'

By YANAN WANG
Associated Press

BEIJING — China will never pursue hegemony, President Xi Jinping said Tuesday as global concerns persist over the country's growing economic influence.

During a speech to mark 40 years of market reforms, Xi repeated China's commitment to a multilateral trading system and further opening of its economy. However, he did not announce any new initiatives to counter a slowing economy and trade frictions with the United States.

The Chinese leader said China would not develop "at the expense of other countries' interests."

China's expanding footprint worldwide — from Asia-Pacific to Africa and beyond through a broad network of infrastructure projects called the Belt and Road Initiative — has led some nations to raise the alarm over what they call China's long arm of influence, which has been criticized for being political as well as economic.

While Xi said China is "increasingly approaching the center of the world stage," he also noted that the country pursues a



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/AP

Chinese President Xi Jinping prepares to present a medal during a conference to commemorate the 40th anniversary of China's Reform and Opening Up policy at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Tuesday.

defensive national defense policy.

"China's development does not pose a threat to any country," Xi said. "No matter how far China develops, it will never seek hegemony."

Xi chronicled at length the coun-

try's recent achievements, giving special credit to former leader Deng Xiaoping, whose reforms Xi said saved China from the brink of economic collapse following the tumultuous Cultural Revolution.

Other celebrations of reform

and opening up have been criticized by scholars for downplaying the role of Deng, widely considered the architect of the changes, in order to elevate Xi.

This time around, Xi spared no praise for Deng, as he began by remarking on the significance of 1978 — the year Deng implemented his first reforms.

During the ceremony, 100 individuals were recognized as pioneers of reform. The eclectic slate included NBA player Yao Ming, Alibaba founder Jack Ma and Nobel prizewinning scientist Tu Youyou. They received their medals to the tune of "Story of Spring," a patriotic ballad paying tribute to Deng.

Throughout, Xi emphasized the absolute rule of the Communist Party and its upholding of Chinese sovereignty.

"No one is in a position to dictate to the Chinese people what should or should not be done," he said. "We will resolutely reform what can and needs to be reformed, and we will resolutely uphold what cannot and does not need to be changed."

Xi's speech espoused "above all else," said Julian Gewirtz,

an international affairs scholar at Harvard, "the distinctiveness and absolute correctness of China's path under the party's leadership."

"This was a broad attempt to provide a really positive, confidence-building story of China's past 40 years and its future," said Gewirtz, who has written a book about China's economic reforms.

The address won't assuage concerned private entrepreneurs and foreign businesses that had hoped Xi would use the occasion to announce concrete, industry-opening measures to shift dominance away from state corporations.

China's push to dominate the high-tech industry by 2025 is a sore point with Washington and a contributing factor in trade tensions that have seen the world's two largest economies slash billions of dollars in punitive tariffs on each other's products this year. In a move welcomed by global stock markets, President Donald Trump agreed Dec. 1 to postpone more U.S. tariff hikes on Chinese imports for 90 days while the two sides negotiate over American complaints about Beijing's technology policy.

Charge of terrorism issued in France

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN
Associated Press

PARIS — A man suspected of supplying the gun used in the Christmas market shooting attack that killed five people in Strasbourg, France, last week has been handed preliminary terrorism charges, according to a French judicial official close to the investigation.

The official, who could not be named with the case ongoing, said the individual appeared Monday before a judge and was charged with criminal association with terrorists, as well as possessing and supplying arms in connection with a terrorist enterprise.

The man is suspected of furnishing the weapon that alleged gunman Cherif Chekatt used in the Dec. 11 attack, the judicial official said. He was remanded into custody.

Chekatt, 29, died in a shoot-out with police in Strasbourg on Thursday.

Two other people were arrested and detained Monday as part of the terrorism investigation that the Paris prosecutor's office is conducting into the attack. They also were suspected of "playing a role in supplying the firearm," said the official.

Their arrests bring the number of suspects in custody since the attack to three; Chekatt's par-



JEAN-FRANCOIS BADIAS/AP

People attend a gathering held in a central square of Strasbourg, France, on Sunday to pay homage to the victims of a gunman who killed four people and wounded a dozen more on Dec. 11.

ents and two of his brothers were questioned by police last week and released.

The death toll from the attack increased to five Sunday night after a Polish man died of his wounds in a Strasbourg hospital. Barto Orent-Niedzielski, 36, lived

in the city, where he worked at the European Parliament and as a journalist. The other casualties include a tourist from Thailand and an Italian journalist.

According to reports, Orent-Niedzielski fought the shooter and stopped him from entering a

crowded club, possibly preventing more deaths. Polish President Andrzej Duda wrote on Twitter that "I knew him by sight. I am shocked. I had not realized that he was the one mortally wounded protecting other people. Honor to his memory. RIP."

Huawei goes on offense

By JOE McDONALD
Associated Press

DONGGUAN, China — The chairman of Huawei called on the United States, Australia and other governments to provide evidence to back up claims the Chinese tech giant is a security risk as it launched a public relations effort to defuse fears that threaten its role in next-generation communications.

Accusations against the biggest global supplier of network gear stem from "ideology and geopolitics," Ken Hu complained on Tuesday. He warned excluding Huawei from the rollout of fifth-generation telecoms will raise costs and hamper innovation.

Hu talked to American, European and Asian reporters who were invited to Huawei headquarters as part of efforts to tamp down concerns the company says are unfounded. If governments have evidence, "it should be made known," Hu said, adding that governments don't have to disclose information publicly but at least should show phone companies that will be blocked from using Huawei technology.

Australia and New Zealand have blocked use of Huawei technology in 5G networks. The U.S. and Taiwan also restrict use of Huawei products. Japan's cybersecurity agency says suppliers including Huawei that are considered high risk will be excluded from government procurement.

WORLD

UK mulls ramping up no-deal Brexit preparations

By JILL LAWLESS
and DANICA KIRKA
Associated Press

LONDON — The British Cabinet was meeting Tuesday to discuss ramping up preparations for Britain's departure from the European Union without a deal, after Prime Minister Theresa May postponed Parliament's vote on her divorce agreement until mid-January.

The discussions are expected to center on how \$2.5 billion in government funding to absorb the potential economic chaos is to be allocated.

Communities Secretary James Brokenshire told the BBC that May's government had been taking the prospect of no deal seriously for some time, but that it was "right and proper" to prepare for a disorderly Brexit.

But May's Cabinet is divided between Brexiters who think a no-deal departure could be managed to ease the economic shock and more pro-EU lawmakers who say no-deal Brexit must be avoided at all costs.

With Britain's departure from

the bloc just over 100 days away, it remains unclear whether the country will leave with a deal or crash out without one — an outcome that risks touching off gridlock at ports and shortages of goods as well as plunging the economy into recession.

Some manufacturers have begun stockpiling parts and goods in anticipation of post-Brexit hiccups to trade. But many businesses — especially smaller firms — have done little to mitigate the economic shock of leaving without a deal.

The British Chambers of Commerce said Tuesday that economic growth and business investment in 2019 were likely to be lower than previously forecast because of the continuing uncertainty.

Director-General Adam Marshall said "the lack of certainty over the U.K.'s future relationship with the EU has led to many firms hitting the pause button on their growth plans."

"With just over 100 days to go until the U.K. leaves the EU and no clear road ahead, businesses are having to take action, delay-



JESSICA TAYLOR, UK PARLIAMENT/AP

Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May delivers a speech in the House of Commons in London on Monday. May said that the postponed vote in Parliament on Britain's Brexit agreement with the European Union will be held the week of Jan. 14.

ing or pulling hiring and investment plans and, in some cases, moving operations elsewhere in order to maintain hard-won supply chains," he said.

The British government and the EU sealed a divorce deal last month, but May postponed a parliamentary vote on it last week when it became clear legislators would overwhelmingly reject it.

She tried to win changes from the EU to sweeten the deal for reluctant lawmakers, but was rebuffed by the bloc at a summit in Brussels last week.

May insisted Monday she could win "clarification" from the EU

to reassure skeptical lawmakers before Parliament votes on the deal during the week of Jan. 14.

Opposition legislators — and many members of May's Conservative Party — remain opposed to the deal. But with Parliament divided on the way forward, the Brexit process is at an impasse.

Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the main opposition Labour Party, on Monday submitted a motion of no-confidence in the prime minister, accusing May of deliberately wasting time by delaying the vote, forcing Parliament to choose between her deal and no deal.

Corbyn's move was symbolic: Losing the vote on such a motion would increase the pressure on May, but unlike a no-confidence vote in the government as a whole it wouldn't trigger a process that could lead to an election.

The government said it would not grant Parliament time to debate the motion, calling it a "stunt." Other opposition parties accused Corbyn of making a futile gesture, and called on him to push instead for a vote of no-confidence in the government — which would have to be put to debate and a vote under parliamentary rules.

Pope shakes up media operations at the Vatican

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis announced Tuesday a shakeup of the Vatican's communications operations, replacing the longtime editor of the Holy See newspaper and naming a prominent Italian journalist to coordinate the editorial line of all Vatican media.

Andrea Tornielli, Vatican reporter for Turin daily La Stampa, was named to the new position of editorial director for the Dicastero of Communications, responsible for coordinating the Vatican's editorial operations.

In addition, the Vatican named an Italian writer and professor, Andrea Monda, to become editor of L'Osservatore Romano newspaper. He replaces Giovanni Maria Vian, a church historian and journalist who has headed the daily since 2007.

The Vatican's media operations have been undergoing a problematic reform process aimed at reducing redundancies and improving coordination. Among its victims was Vatican Radio and its vast multilingual broadcasts.

The first head of the revamped umbrella communications office, which gathered all Vatican media under one department, was forced to resign earlier this year after he misrepresented a letter from retired Pope Benedict XVI and released a doctored photo of it.

Francis named Paolo Ruffini, who had led the broadcaster of the Italian bishops' conference, to replace him — the first time a layman had been



GREGORIO BORGIA/AP

Pope Francis waves in St. Peter's Square on Sunday. The Pope on Tuesday announced a change in the Vatican's communications operations.

named to head a Holy See department. In a statement Tuesday, Ruffini said both Tornielli and Monda are bridge-builders who know how to speak to various generations and develop new means of communications.

L'Osservatore Romano, with its storied 150-year history and daily and weekly editions, had sought to retain a certain editorial independence from the rest of the Vatican's other media operations during the reform.

Under Vian's leadership, the paper broadened its cultural coverage and launched a women's monthly magazine, "Women Church World," among other things.

Morocco arrests suspect after deaths of 2 tourists

Associated Press

RABAT, Morocco — Moroccan authorities say one person has been arrested in connection with the deaths of two female Scandinavian tourists in the Atlas Mountains, a popular hiking destination.

The Interior Ministry said the two women, from Denmark and Norway, were discovered Monday "with evidence of violence on

their necks."

Moroccan security services said Tuesday that one person had been arrested in Marrakesh in connection with the deaths. An investigation is ongoing.

The two women's bodies were found in a remote mountainous region 6.2 miles from the village of Imilil, which is typically is the starting point for treks to Mount Toubkal, the highest peak in North Africa.

Report says Iranian general accidentally killed himself

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — The website of Iran's Revolutionary Guard is reporting that a general who fought in Syria and Iraq has allegedly accidentally killed himself while cleaning a gun.

Gen. Ghodrattollah Mansouri allegedly shot himself in the head by accident while cleaning his pistol, according to the Sunday report.

The report added that Mansouri was veteran of the 1980s

Iran-Iraq War and a "defender of the shrine," a reference to Iranians who fight against the extremist Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

Since 2014, Mansouri was a regional commander of the Guard's ground forces in the northeastern city of Mashhad, some 460 miles east of the capital Tehran.

Hundreds of Iranian forces have been killed fighting ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

NATION



DOLLS FOR A CAUSE

Group
brings
donated
toys back
to life for
Christmas

BY KABREA JAMES
The (Beckley, W.Va.)
Register-Herald

of toys. This year, close to 1,500 people were added to that list, Harvey said. “The need is growing in the community.” Mac’s Toy Fund has existed since 1930. The fund raises money and collects used toys, bikes and coats for distribution to children in the community.

‘All you have to do is see a girl grab a doll and smile one time,” Diana Harvey said as she sifted through giant buckets of doll clothing. “It hooks you.”

Over the course of 16 years, Harvey, the doll coordinator for Mac’s Toy Fund, said the organization has donated between 600 and 800 dolls each Christmas to little girls in need in southern West Virginia.

But before the dolls can be gifted, they must go through a refurbishment process. And although it might seem tedious, Harvey said this is a one and only chance, for most people, to sit and play with dolls.

“It’s fun having an excuse to play with dolls.” The dolls are separated between new and used before being washed. After the dolls are cleaned thoroughly, participants use miniature combs and brushes to detangle the dolls’ hair.

The dolls are then gifted to girls from “birth to age 12” at Mac’s Toy Fund distribution party, according to Harvey.

Every year, coordinators send tickets to families who receive any sort of assistance from the state. Harvey said churches may also submit names of people in need and then get back to work.

BECKLEY, W.Va.



PHOTOS BY RICK BARBERO, THE (BECKLEY, W.Va.) REGISTER-HERALD/AP



Above: Diana Harvey works on refurbishing dolls for the Mac’s Toy Fund earlier this month in Beckley, W.Va.

Left: Kathryn Zankowitz, from left, Joan Johnson and Marion Gaskill help refurbish dolls.

Factory run by volunteers gives away all the toys for free

BY CATHY FREE
Special To The Washington Post

A long-haul truck driver recently walked into Tiny Tim’s Toy Foundation in West Jordan, Utah, and asked for a box of toys. Alton Thacker gave him five, each packed with 125 cars.

“He stopped at children’s hospitals along his truck route and handed them out,” said Thacker, 83, a retired barber who started the toy factory 16 years ago. “And I know he’ll be back for more. Seeing all those little smiles is a great motivator.”

The cars — simple wooden toys with a painted smile — are made at the factory and given free to children in need around the globe through charities, churches, children’s hospitals and sometimes truckers who stop by for a box.

Thacker’s factory reached a huge milestone this year when he cranked out his 1 millionth toy. He celebrated for a moment and then got back to work.

“For every car we finish and give away, there’s always another child who needs one,” Thacker said. “For some kids around the world, one of our little wooden

cars is the first and only toy they’ll ever get.”

The nonprofit organization turns out between 80,000 and 120,000 wooden toy cars a year using a volunteer workforce mainly composed of retirees — with an average age of 80 — who are looking for a way to put their hands to good use again.

“The highlight of my week is coming to the factory to help sand cars,” said Wade Bender, 74, a retired high school biology teacher and football coach who drives 60 miles round-trip to Tiny Tim’s every Tuesday.

A car built from a block of scrap wood is a simple thing, he said, but the impact is immense. He said all kids react the same when they get the toy — whether they’re in a children’s hospital, a restaurant, a tough neighborhood close to home or a developing country. The cars have been delivered to children in countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Ghana, Thailand, Russia, Mexico and Brazil.

“Kids will drop to the floor and start ‘driving’ them on the concrete, the tile, the dirt,” Bender said. “The response of pure joy is always the same.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Poacher ordered to repeatedly watch 'Bambi'

MO SPRINGFIELD — A Missouri poacher was ordered to repeatedly watch the movie "Bambi" as part of his sentence for illegally killing hundreds of deer.

The Springfield News-Leader reported that David Berry Jr. was to watch the Walt Disney movie the first time before Sunday and at least once each month during his one-year jail sentence in southwest Missouri's Lawrence County. He was convicted there of taking wildlife illegally. He also was sentenced last week to 120 days in jail in nearby Barton County for a firearms probation violation.

Lawrence County Prosecuting Attorney Don Trotter said the deer were killed for their heads, with their bodies left to rot.

Crew rescues llama amid heavy rains

MD HIGHLAND — A special operations crew tasked with helping drivers escape floodwaters in Maryland also took on a more unique task: rescuing a llama.

News outlets reported the llama's owner reported the animal was trapped in a pasture that had flooded overnight. Howard County Department of Fire and Emergency Rescue services spokeswoman Denise Weist said the water "was deep enough that there was no way it was going to cross."

So the rescue crew got to work, fastening a rope to the llama's harness and walking it through the waist-high water.

City wins auction for historic Route 66 sign

IL SPRINGFIELD — The city of Springfield is the winning bidder for a historic neon sign that's one of the city's remaining Route 66 landmarks.

The State Journal-Register reported an online auction was held for the Sunrise Donuts sign, which went up along Route 66 in 1949.

At one point the top bidders were in Chicago and California. But Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau director Scott Dahl revealed Friday the city made the winning bid of \$22,000. The money will come from city hotel-motel tax.

Dahl says buying the sign "ensures our visitors will continue to experience Springfield's story as it relates to Route 66." Plans for the 6-by-8-foot sign weren't announced.

Shatterproof glass thwarts robbers

MI GRAND RAPIDS — A brazen daylight robbery turned into a bizarre bungle as would-be robbers were thwarted by shatterproof glass at a jewelry store near Grand Rapids.

Mlive.com reported that two men entered a Jared Galleria of Jewelry store Saturday during business hours with several employees and customers present. They wore hoods and what



JACQUELINE DORMER, (POTTSVILLE, PA.) REPUBLICAN-HERALD/AP

Guardian angel

Lilianna Rettzo, left, of Gilberton, Pa., helps her cousin Mila Fowler of Emmaus, Pa., back to her seat during the 15th annual candlelight Christmas Pageant at St. Michael the Archangel Ukrainian Catholic Church in Frackville, Pa., on Sunday.

were described as ski masks. Grandville police Sgt. Christine Merryweather said the men used a hammer to try to smash a jewelry case but could not penetrate the shatterproof glass.

Building to be converted into Tubman museum

NJ CAPE MAY — Officials announced plans to convert a New Jersey church building into a Harriet Tubman museum. The Press of Atlantic City

reported developers signed an agreement with the Macedonia Baptist Church in Cape May on Sunday to renovate the church's old parsonage and turn it into a museum honoring the abolitionist.

Developer Robert Mullock said Tubman spent time in Cape May during the 1850s.

Church trustee chairperson Lynda Towns said they hope for the project to be complete by 2020 when federal officials plan to release the new \$20 bill featuring Tubman's face on the front.

THE CENSUS



\$1K The worth of donated toys an Ohio man is accused of stealing.

Po-lice said Calvin Hunter, 46, signed up Dec. 10 to volunteer at the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves' Toys for Tots program in Akron. Investigators said Hunter was seen on surveillance video taking toys from a storage area that night. Hunter turned himself in to authorities Friday.

do not indicate that a public hearing was held to hear complaints about the statue before it was unveiled in 1981.

The committee said the request did not meet any of the 10 criteria used to consider removing public art.

Bullied boy named Trump gets support

DE CLAYMONT — An anti-bullying organization is offering some encouragement to a middle-school student who has been teased because his last name is Trump.

The News Journal reported that Pennsylvania-based national nonprofit Teach Anti Bullying awarded Joshua Trump the Teach Anti Bullying Medal of Courage at a ceremony in his Delaware home Saturday.

Brandywine School District officials said Joshua's parents raised concerns about their son's safety with staff at Talley Middle School in Wilmington. School officials said they have offered support for Joshua, including mentoring and a name change in the database so that all staff refer to him by his father's surname, Berto, instead of his mother's surname, Trump.

Auto museum to close; will auction vehicles

MS TUPELO — An automobile museum in Mississippi is closing next year, with the co-founder saying it's no longer "sustainable" for her and some volunteers to operate.

The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal reported the co-founder of the Tupelo Automobile Museum, Jane Spain, plans to sell all 178 vehicles the museum owns, with the proceeds for a charitable education foundation her late husband Frank Spain envisioned.

The museum opened in 2002 but the newspaper reported it's never had the numbers of visitors needed to be self-supporting.

The auction is set April 25-27. Among the collection is an 1886 Ben three-wheeled car, a 1918 Stanley Steamer, a 1929 Duesenberg Model J and a 1957 Corvette.

From wire reports

Panel rejects request to remove statue

AZ TUCSON — A statue of Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa is remaining in downtown Tucson following an effort by a conservative watchdog group to remove it.

The Arizona Daily Star reported members of the Public Art and Community Design Committee last week unanimously rejected a removal request by Washington, D.C.-based Judicial Watch.

The group claims city records

FACES



James Patterson has become a jolly old elf for independent bookstore employees. The best-selling author has handed out bonuses for the past five years.

Patterson again gives out bonuses

Associated Press

James Patterson has renewed a most welcome holiday publishing tradition — bonuses for independent bookstore employees.

The best-selling author announced Tuesday that 333 workers each will receive \$750. The winners, nominated by customers and colleagues among others, are listed on the web site of the American Booksellers Association. Patterson has given more than \$1 million to individual book sellers over the past five years and has donated millions to libraries and literacy programs.

In a statement Tuesday, Patterson said book sellers have used the money for everything from fixing a car to paying a dental bill. He said he was happy to make “a small difference” in the lives of people who had helped so many in their communities.

Country band to mark 50th with 2019 tour

Associated Press

Country band Alabama will mark its 50th year together with a tour in 2019, more than a year after founding member Jeff Cook announced that he has Parkinson's disease.

The Grammy Award-winning trio of Randy Owen, Teddy Gentry and Cook formed in 1969 in Fort Payne, Ala., and went on to dominate the sound of country music in the 1980s, scoring dozens of No. 1 hits, including classics like “Mountain Music” and “Dixieland Delight.”

Guitarist and fiddle player Cook announced in 2017 that he had been diagnosed with the chronic neurological disorder years ago and he would limit his touring with the band. Cook will perform on their new tour, which begins Jan. 10 in Detroit, as much as he's physically able.

Dude, Bridges to be honored at Globes

By LIBBY HILL
Los Angeles Times

That second Golden Globe is really going to tie the room together for Jeff Bridges.

The “Big Lebowski” actor will be honored at the 76th Golden Globes ceremony Jan. 6 with the Cecil B. DeMille Award, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association announced Monday.

“Bridges’ brilliant body of work across diverse genres has captured the hearts and minds of audiences worldwide for more than six decades,” HFPA President Mehrtat said in a statement. “We look forward to celebrating ‘the Dude’ and his remarkable career and philanthropic achievements at the upcoming Golden Globe Awards.”

The actor scored Golden Globe nominations for his performances in “Starman,” “The Fisher King,” “The

Contender” and “Hell or High Water,” in addition to winning for his role in 2009’s “Crazy Heart.”

Bridges also boasts five Screen Actors Guild Award nominations and seven Academy Award nominations — taking home trophies at each for his “Crazy Heart” performance.

Previous Cecil B. DeMille honorees include George Clooney, Robert De Niro, Audrey Hepburn, Harrison Ford, Jodie Foster, Sophia Loren, Sidney Poitier, Denzel Washington, Robin Williams and Oprah Winfrey.



Yalitza Aparicio, center, is pictured in a scene from “Roma,” by filmmaker Alfonso Cuarón. The movie, considered a strong bet for a best picture nomination, took a step closer to a nomination for best foreign language film Monday.

‘Roma’ keeps momentum, makes shortlist for Oscars

By LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

A number of Oscar hopefuls just got one step closer to a nomination with Monday’s reveal of nine Academy Awards shortlists, including best foreign language film where Alfonso Cuarón’s “Roma” and Lee Chang-dong’s thriller “Burning” are among nine films in consideration.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences on Monday announced shortlists for a number of below-the-line categories including hair and makeup, score, original song and best documentary, where crowd-pleasers like the Ruth Bader Ginsburg documentary “RBG” and the Fred Rogers film “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” made the cut.

Shortlists, decided by executive committees in the film academy, help narrow the playing field in many of the categories before they are whittled down to five final nominations in late January.

Many believe Mexico’s “Roma” to be a front-runner for a best picture nomination as well, while the acclaimed “Burning,” which is based on a Haruki Murakami story, could make history by becoming South Korea’s first-ever nominee.

Other films in contention include Poland’s

“Cold War,” which was snubbed by the Golden Globe Awards, Lebanon’s “Capernaum,” Japan’s “Shoplifters,” Colombia’s “Birds of Passage,” Denmark’s “The Guilty,” Germany’s “Never Look Away” and Kazakhstan’s “Ayka.”

Notable documentary features also included on the shortlist include “Minding the Gap,” a 12-year odyssey about a group of skateboarders growing up in Rockford, Ill., the too-wild-to-be-true “Three Identical Strangers,” about triplets separated by adoption at birth who find each other later in life, and the intense climbing film “Free Solo.”

This is the first time since 1979 that the film academy has released a shortlist for the music categories. Fifteen original songs were selected from 90 submissions and include “Shallow” from “A Star Is Born,” “All The Stars” from “Black Panther,” Dolly Parton’s “Girl in the Movies” from “Dumplin’,” and two songs from “Mary Poppins Returns” — “The Place Where Lost Things Go” and “Trip a Little Light Fantastic.”

“Mary Poppins Returns” and “Black Panther” were also shortlisted for best original score, as was “Vice” and “If Beale Street Could Talk,” which were both composed by Nicholas Britell.

Other news

■ Jimmy Fallon’s “Tonight Show” will air an episode Jan. 15 from Puerto Rico including an exclusive performance with **Lin-Manuel Miranda** reprising his role in “Hamilton.” NBC announced Monday. The telecast will focus on Puerto Rico’s recovery efforts to rebuild and raise awareness after Hurricane Maria massively struck the island in 2017.

■ Rapper **T.I.** is paying a \$300 fine after pleading no contest to violating a local law in Georgia that prohibits public cursing. The charge against the performer stems from a May incident at the gated community where he lives in the Atlanta suburb of Stockbridge. His spokesman, Steve Sadow, tells the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that T.I., whose real name is Clifford Harris Jr., maintains his innocence but entered a plea “to put this matter to bed.”

■ “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” star **Alfonso Ribeiro** is suing the creators of Fortnite and NBA 2K for using his famous dance on the popular video games. In separate lawsuits filed Monday in federal court, Ribeiro alleges that Fortnite-maker Epic Games and 2K Sports-creator Take-Two Interactive used his dance dubbed “The Carlton Dance” without permission or credit. Ribeiro’s dance was popularized through his character, Carlton Banks, on the 1990s sitcom. Ribeiro says he is currently by copyrighting the dance.

■ **Shirley MacLaine** will receive AARP the Magazine’s lifetime achievement honor at the Movies for Grownups Awards next year. The magazine announced Tuesday that she will accept the award at a ceremony on Feb. 4 in Beverly Hills. Calif. MacLaine won an Oscar for best actress for her role in the 1983 film “Terms of Endearment.”

■ A former detective is suing the filmmakers who produced the 2015 Netflix series “Making a Murderer” alleging the documentary defamed him. Manitowoc County (Wis.) Sheriff’s Detective Andrew Colborn helped convict Steven Avery in the 2005 killing of photographer Teresa Halbach. “Making a Murderer” documents the case. Colborn contends the series was edited to make viewers think he and others planted evidence to frame Avery.

From The Associated Press

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Ex-CBS CEO Moonves denied \$120M severance

By ALEXANDRA OLSON
Associated Press

NEW YORK — CBS Corp. announced Monday that former CEO Les Moonves will not receive his \$120 million severance package after the board of directors concluded he violated company policy and was uncooperative with an investigation into sexual misconduct allegations.

The decision, which came after a five-month outside investigation, capped the downfall of one of television's most influential figures, the biggest entertainment

powerbroker to see his career derailed amid the #MeToo movement against sexual misconduct.

A lawyer for Moonves said the board's conclusions "are without merit" but did not say whether the former CEO would challenge it in arbitration.

Moonves was ousted in September after allegations from women who said he subjected them to mistreatment including forced oral sex, groping and retaliation if they resisted.

"This is an important reminder that harassment happens every-

where and that in this moment, even someone who has been perceived as untouchable will be held accountable," said Fatima Gross Graves, a co-founder of the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund, which provides legal assistance to victims of assault, harassment or abuse. "I hope other corporations are learning that lesson."

New York-based CBS said at the time of Moonves' departure that it had set aside \$120 million in severance for him but warned that he would not get the money if the board concluded it had

cause to terminate him.

"We have determined that there are grounds to terminate for cause, including his willful and material misfeasance, violation of company policies and breach of his employment contract, as well as his willful failure to cooperate fully with the company's investigation," the CBS said in a statement.

The board did not provide details. Earlier this month, The New York Times said a draft report from the outside investigation found that Moonves deleted

numerous text messages and was "extensive and untruthful at times."

Andrew Levander, an attorney for Moonves, said his client "vehemently denies any nonconsensual sexual relations and cooperated extensively and fully with investigators."

"Consistent with the pattern of leaks that have permeated this process," the press was informed of these baseless conclusions before Mr. Moonves, further damaging his name, reputation, career and legacy," Levander said.

Silicon Valley East: Google plans \$1B expansion in NY

By MAE ANDERSON
Associated Press

Silicon Valley is becoming Silicon Nation. Google announced Monday it will spend more than \$1 billion to build a new office complex in New York City that will allow the internet search giant to double the number of people it employs there.

It is the tech industry's latest major expansion beyond the Seattle-San Francisco Bay corridor. It follows recent steps by Amazon and Apple to set up large operations well outside their home turf.

Tech companies are "coming to the realization that the Bay Area, which has traditionally been the major center of tech activity in the U.S., is getting expensive and crowded," said Andrew Bartels, principal analyst at Forrester Research.

"A lot of vendors are coming to the realization that 'we can probably find top talent elsewhere at

more affordable costs, and perhaps a better style of life for employees who may be struggling to make ends meet."

The Northeast is attractive because of its large concentration of highly educated young people. New York, in particular, also offers proximity to Wall Street and already has the second-biggest concentration of tech startups behind the Bay Area and a large base of tech employees, Bartels said. Facebook, based in Menlo Park, Calif., has over 2,000 employees in New York.

Google, based in Mountain View, Calif., will fashion a complex of more than 1.7 million square feet along the Hudson River in the city's West Village neighborhood, Ruth Porat, senior vice president and chief financial officer, said in a blog post.

Google opened its first office in New York nearly 20 years ago and now employs 7,000 people in the city, Google said earlier this



A building, right, that has been chosen by Google as part of its expansion plans is near a graffiti-covered wall in New York.

year that it would buy the Chelsea Market building for \$2.4 billion and planned to lease more space at Pier 57, both along the Hudson about a mile north of the newly announced complex.

Porat telegraphed Google's plans a month ago during a technology conference: "Not everybody — big surprise — wants to live in Silicon Valley, so we want to make sure we have the opportunity to build vibrant centers across the country," she said.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Dec. 19)	\$1.1689
Dollar buys (Dec. 19)	€0.8555
British pound (Dec. 19)	\$1.30
Japanese yen (Dec. 19)	\$1.10
South Korean won (Dec. 19)	1,101.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.2645
Canada (dollar)	1.3419
China (yuan)	6.8961
Denmark (krone)	6.5703
Egypt (pound)	17.9072
Euro	\$1.1366/0.8798
Hong Kong (dollar)	7.8198
Hungary (forint)	284.05
Israel (shekel)	3.7592
Japan (yen)	112.56
Kuwait (dinar)	0.3042
Norway (krone)	8.7011
Philippines (peso)	53.13
Poland (zloty)	3.77
Saudi Arabia (riyal)	3.7516
Singapore (dollar)	1.3710
South Korea (won)	1,129.34
Switzerland (franc)	0.9924
Thailand (baht)	32.77
Turkey (lira)	6.3466

Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.25
Discount rate	2.75
Federals funds market rate	1.9
3-month bill	2.38
30-year bond	3.11

MARKET WATCH

Dec. 17, 2018

Dow Jones	-507.53
Industrials	23,592.98
Nasdaq composite	-156.93
Standard & Poor's 500	-54.01
	2,545.94
Russell 2000	-32.67
	1,378.14

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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Tobias Naegle

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OPINION

About those military spending comparisons ...

By MAX BOOT

The Washington Post

"We don't spend enough on military" is such a ridiculous take that I had to check to make sure this wasn't an Onion article."

That Twitter comment was typical of the incredulous reaction to my recent column ("US is losing the ability to defend itself," Dec. 16, Stars and Stripes) about the National Defense Strategy Commission's alarming report. It warned that "America has reached the point of a full-blown national security crisis," because we can no longer be sure of victory against potential adversaries such as China or Russia. The bipartisan commission called for greater investment in air-, land-, sea-, space- and cyberpower to maintain U.S. dominance.

I wrote that no such increase in defense spending would be possible until we get our fiscal house in order — we need to address budget deficits that will soon reach \$1 trillion a year by reforming entitlement spending and raising revenue. But my argument struck many as preposterous. Why, a lot of readers argued, should we spend more on defense when we already spend more than the next seven countries combined? The United States is spending \$716 billion on its defense in 2019 compared with \$215 billion for China and \$69 billion for Russia in 2016. Joe Plenzer, a retired Marine officer, wanted to know how we are being out-matched by countries that spend so much less than we do. "Something really doesn't add up," he tweeted.

Skeptics of defense spending can point to the fact that the Defense Department recently failed its first audit. Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., went so far as to claim that the Pentagon lost track of \$21 trillion to suggest that there is a vast pot of money that is unaccounted for. That is a false claim that earned her four Pinocchios from The Washington Post's fact-checkers: Just because the Pentagon comptroller has trouble tracking some transactions does not mean the money is being wasted or stolen. The Defense Strategy Commission conceded that DOD needs to become more efficient to "assure taxpayers that their tax dollars are well-spent" but warned "that even the most optimistic advocates of reform cannot identify sufficient savings to make this approach a reliable source of real growth in defense capability."



SERGEI GENTS/AP

A Russian honor guard prepares to take a part in a parade prior to military exercises in eastern Siberia in September. While U.S. service personnel are volunteers who receive competitive pay and benefits, Russia and China rely mainly on low-paid conscripts.

So if the answer isn't sheer waste, why isn't the United States generating more bang for its buck? Much of the explanation lies in the fact that U.S. service personnel are volunteers who receive competitive pay and benefits, while Russia and China rely mainly on low-paid conscripts. (Russia is introducing more professionals, but the transformation is far from complete.) Personnel and health care costs consume 42 percent of the U.S. defense budget — and growing. That is what it takes to support 2.2 million active-duty and reserve soldiers and their families, along with 740,000 DOD civilians. Add in retirees and their families, and the military's Tricare health insurance program serves 9.4 million people. The average cost of health care per active-duty servicemember doubled between 2001 and 2016 and continues to increase just as civilian health care costs do. Those are bills Beijing and Moscow don't have to worry about paying. By one calculation, if you compare Chinese and American defense spending at purchasing-power parity, and if you take out U.S. personnel costs, China actually spends more on defense than we do.

China and Russia also haven't had their military equipment chewed up in 17 years of war. The United States has: The deserts of Iraq and the mountains of Afghanistan have been a punishing environment in which to operate. And the 9/11 wars followed the "peace dividend" drawdown and the procurement holiday of the 1990s. The United States has to recapitalize its forces while also modernizing them to keep up with countries such as China and Russia that are innovating in fields such as artificial

intelligence, quantum computers and hypersonic missiles.

Many critics pointed out that the United States' homeland is not endangered: I.e., we don't have to worry about a Russian or Chinese invasion. True, but we do have to worry about the possibility that we may no longer be able to win a war in Europe or the Pacific — much less simultaneous wars in both theaters. The United States has long had the goal of being dominant militarily in the three major centers of world power — Europe, the Middle East and East Asia. China and Russia, by contrast, seek only to dominate their own regions. Put another way, we need to win the "away" game; they only need to win at home, which is cheaper and easier.

A number of readers suggested that we should lay down the burden of primacy. That is an alluring option, but we should remember what happened in the past when the United States embraced isolationism — or, if you prefer, non-interventionism. Do the years 1914, 1939 and 1950 jog your memory? The historical record shows that if we are not able to overawe potential aggressors, we are more likely to be dragged into wars (e.g., World War I, World War II, the Korean War) that ultimately exact a far greater toll in blood and treasure. American primacy may be a drag, but it beats the alternatives — and if we are to maintain our geopolitical primacy, we will need to stop the erosion of our military edge.

Washington Post columnist Max Boot is the Jean Koppelman Institute for national security studies at the Council on Foreign Relations and author of "The Road Not Taken: Edward Lansdale and the American Tragedy in Vietnam."

Average stateside housing allowances rise 2.55 percent

By TOM PHILPOTT

Special to Stars and Stripes

Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) paid to a million service members living off base in the United States will rise by an average 2.55 percent in January as a fifth and final annual step to dampen allowance calculations takes effect.

Actual BAH increases next month for individuals will vary based on where they are assigned, their specific paygrade or rank, and whether they are single or have family dependents.

Since 2015 the Department of Defense has trimmed BAH increases by 1 percent annually with the goal that by 2019 housing allowances would cover only 95 percent of local rent and utility costs, leaving servicemembers responsible for paying 5 percent out-of-pocket. The purpose of the rate-dampening scheme was to hold down personnel cost growth by targeting the \$21 billion BAH program.

DOD officials said in a press release announcing new rates that out-of-pocket amounts reflected in 2019 BAH rates will

MILITARY UPDATE

range from \$66 to \$149 per month, amounts they described as "fair, responsible and sustainable," keeping overall military pay and benefits "robust and healthy."

New rates are online: <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/bahCalc>. cms.house.gov/Delivery

Military folks don't pay taxes on their housing allowance. As previously announced, taxable military basic pay will climb on Jan. 1 by 2.6 percent.

BAH rates are reset annually based on housing cost data (rent and utilities) collected for more than 36 military housing areas in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. Costs are surveyed for six housing profiles — a combination of dwelling type (apartments, townhouses, single-family homes) and number of bedrooms. Individual rates reflect local median market rents and average utility costs for the type of housing deemed appropriate for a servicemember based on rank and depen-

dency status.

Economic consulting firm Robert D. Niehaus Inc. collects nationwide cost data for six different housing types and bedroom numbers in every military housing area. Additionally, local military housing offices provide rental cost information for adequate and available properties in their communities. Cost surveys won't include neighborhoods identified by census tract data or military housing offices as inadequate. Utility costs are calculated using other survey data of what civilians in each housing area and housing profile are spending on utilities.

DOD this year did not release data on how many housing areas report BAH declines because local rental costs have fallen. But where that occurs, a rate protection rule ensures that no current BAH recipients will see allowances cut in the new year unless they move to a new locale, are demoted in rank or their dependency status changes through divorce, separation or death.

Sent comments to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, VA, 20120; email military@aoi.com; Twitter: @Military_Update.

THE STARS AND STRIPES

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in the European Theater of Operations

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1 Fr.

1 Fr.

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For the troops

Stars and Stripes was a primary source of news for the troops at the Front and behind the lines in World War II. Although it printed only in the European theater during the war, it covered news from all theaters.



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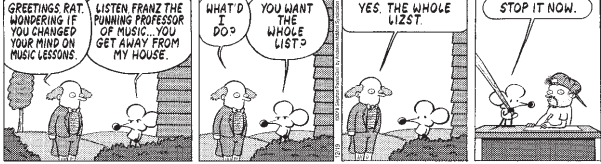
Frazz



Dilbert



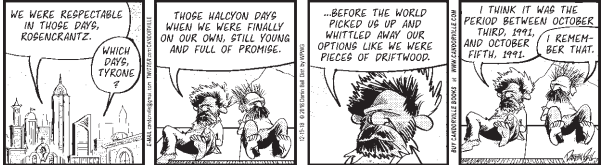
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
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54					55					56		
57					58					59		

ACROSS

- 1 Cast a ballot
- 5 — carte
- 8 Pack cargo
- 12 Big-screen format
- 13 'You've got mail' ISP
- 15 School fundraiser
- 17 Erupted
- 18 Adversary
- 19 Orchestral instruments
- 21 Use a rosary
- 24 Profit
- 25 Salamander
- 28 Endure
- 30 Canine cry
- 33 'Entourage' character
- 34 Sounds from Santa
- 35 Privy
- 36 Knee protector
- 37 Thames town
- 38 Second in command
- 39 Greek H
- 41 Leer at
- 43 Bounty
- 46 Start
- 50 Bridge coup
- 51 Hall of Fame pitcher Don
- 54 Low-lying area

DOWN

- 1 Unspoken feeling
- 2 Muscat's land
- 3 Seize
- 4 Off the hook
- 5 Bond rating
- 6 Texter's chuckle
- 7 Sir Guinness
- 8 Shade of black
- 9 Revealing
- 10 Crunchy cookie
- 11 Amazes
- 16 Neighbor of Leb.
- 20 Tolkien creatures
- 22 Oodles
- 23 Bumpkin
- 25 Snooze
- 26 Historic time
- 27 Type of corduroy
- 29 Dance partner?
- 31 Caviar base
- 32 Dandy guy
- 34 Get wind of
- 38 Merchant
- 40 No longer wild
- 42 — Alamos
- 43 Answer an invite
- 44 Israeli airline
- 45 June 6, 1944
- 47 Long story
- 48 Grade sch.
- 49 Golf props
- 52 Nipper's co.
- 53 'Uh-huh'

Answer to Previous Puzzle

E	A	S	E	W	A	R	A	L	T	O
G	L	E	N	R	I	O	D	E	E	P
G	L	I	T	T	E	R	S	D	I	R
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T	I	N	Y		G	L	I	S	T	E
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			E	E	L	S		R	A	M
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12-19

CRYPTOQUIP

MSQ DAGOZQX GB OQKEC
AQVZZT OVR VM DZVTEKC
XHFEI HDGK BEAFM FQKEC
MSQ FIGAQ: FZEC SM
AQVREKC.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN ELECTRONIC WORKERS ARE ACTING LIKE BUFFOONS, CAN YOU SAY THEY'RE BEING CIRCUITS CLOWNS?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals P


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Automotive 140

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SCOREBOARD

Sports

Go to the American Forces network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules. myafn.net

Deals

Monday's transactions

BASEBALL

NEW YORK YANKEES — Agreed to terms with LHP Luis Tiant on a two-year contract. Designated RHP Parker Bridwell for assignment.

TEXAS RANGERS — Agreed to terms with RHP Matt Bush and Tim Lillard. LHP Zach Curtis and INF Chase d'Arnaud on minor league contracts.

NEW YORK METS — Agreed to terms with RHP Matt Bush and Tim Lillard. LHP Zach Curtis and INF Chase d'Arnaud on minor league contracts.

PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Agreed to terms with RHP Jordan Lyles on a one-year contract.

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Traded 2B Jhonny Peralta to Cleveland to complete an earlier trade.

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION — **ATLANTA HAWKS** — Transferred F Alex Abrines to Erie (NBAFL).

INDIANA PACERS — Named Kelly Kravitz assistant general manager.

OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER — Executed 11th-year option on coach Billy Donovan's contract.

WASHINGTON WIZARDS — Traded F Kevon Love Jr. and G Austin Rivers to Phoenix for F Trevor Ariza.

FLORIDA

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE — **PHILADELPHIA EAGLES** — Agreed to NFL one game for violating the NFL policy and program for substances of abuse.

ATLANTA FALCONS — Placed RB Ito Smith on injured reserve.

GREEN BAY PACKERS — Claimed RB David Johnson off waivers from Washington.

NEW YORK JETS — Signed WR DeAndre Hopkins to a one-year contract.

PHOENIX CARDINALS — Signed CEO David Baker to a five-year contract.

HOCKEY

NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE — **ARIZONA COYOTES** — Assigned F Michael Bunting to Tucson (AHL).

NEW YORK RANGERS — Assigned LW MacKenzie Blacklock from Birmingham (AHL).

PHILADELPHIA FLYERS — Fired coach Claude Giroux. Named Scott Gordon interim coach.

ST. LOUIS BLUES — Reassigned C Tanner Kasper from Tulsa (ECHL) to San Antonio. Recalled LW Zach Sanford from AHL.

MOTORSPORTS — **INDYCAR** — Promoted Jay Jay to president, effective Jan. 1.

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER — **FC DALLAS** — Named Luis Gonzalez coach.

NEW ENGLAND REVOLUTION — Reassigned Juan Agudelo to a multiyear contract.

PHILADELPHIA UNIONS — Signed D Fabian Valentin to a one-year contract.

RETIRED KANSAS CITY — D Brad Ewing announced his retirement.

INDIANA — Announced sophomore QB Jack Tuttle is transferring from OHSU.

NEW MEXICO — Agreed to terms with baseball coach Ray Birmingham on a three-year contract. Announced his retirement senior advisor and director/chief financial officer, will be leaving the department to pursue a career in business.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE — Named Kirk Roper coach and coordinator for the baseball team.

OHIO STATE — Redshirt junior RB Mike Williams transferred to the NFL Draft in the Rose Bowl.

TEXAS — Named Henry Baker defensive backs coach and coordinator for the passing defense.

AP spotlight

Dec. 19 — Marshall, led by Byron Lett, comes back from a 38-8 halftime deficit to beat East Carolina in a double-overtime in the GMAC Bowl for the highest scoring bowl game in history.

College football

Bowl schedule
Saturday, Dec. 15
Celebration Bowl
At Atlanta
N.C. A&T 24, Akron State 22

Cure Bowl
Orlando, Fla.
Tulane 41, Louisiana-Lafayette 24
Lafayette
Fresno State 31, Arizona State 13

Camellia Bowl
Montgomery, Ala.
Georgia Southern 23, North Carolina 13
New Orleans Bowl
Appalachian State 45, Middle Tennessee 13

Tuesday, Dec. 18
Boca Raton (Fla.) Bowl
UAB (10-3) vs. North Illinois (8-5)
Wednesday, Dec. 19
Frisc (Texas) Bowl
San Diego State (7-5) vs. Ohio (8-4)

Thursday, Dec. 20
Gasparilla Bowl
St. Petersburg, Fla.
Marshall (8-4) vs. South Florida (7-5)

Friday, Dec. 21
Bahamas Bowl
Nassau
Toledo (7-5) vs. Toledo (7-5)

Famous Idaho Potato Bowl
Boise
Western Michigan (6-5) vs. BYU (6-5)
Dec. 22
Birmingham Bowl
Memphis (8-5) vs. Wake Forest (6-6)

Dec. 23
Fort Worth Bowl
Houston (8-4) vs. Army (10-2)

Dec. 24
Buffalo (Ind.) vs. Tri-9 (3)
Hawaii Bowl
Honolulu
Louisiana Tech (7-5) vs. Hawaii (8-5)

Wednesday, Dec. 26
SERVPRO First Responders Bowl
Dallas
Boston College (5-5) vs. Boise State (10-3)

Quick Lane Bowl
Detroit
Minnesota (6-6) vs. Georgia Tech (7-5)

Thursday, Dec. 27
Independence Bowl
Newport, La.
Temple (8-4) vs. Duke (7-5)

Friday, Dec. 28
Michigan City Bowl
Nashville, Tenn.
Purdue (6-6) vs. Auburn (7-5)

Saturday, Dec. 29
Camping World Bowl
Orlando, Fla.
West Virginia (8-5) vs. Arkansas (9-3)

Alamo Bowl
San Antonio
Iowa State (8-5) vs. Washington State (10-2)

Peach Bowl
Atlanta
Florida (9-3) vs. Michigan (10-2)

Bell Bowl
Charlotte, N.C.
South Carolina (7-5) vs. Virginia (7-5)

Tucson, Ariz.
Arizona (8-4) vs. Pittsburgh (7-5)
Cotton Bowl Classic
Arlington, Texas
CFL Memphis, Notre Dame (12-0) vs. Clemson (13-0)

Orange Bowl
Miami Gardens, Fla.
CFL Memphis, Oklahoma (12-1) vs. Alabama (13-0)

Monday, Dec. 31
Annapolis, Md.
Cincinnati (10-2) vs. Michigan Tech (6-6)

San Bowl
El Paso, Texas
Stanford (8-4) vs. Washington (7-6)

Redbox Bowl
Santa Clara, Calif.
Michigan State (7-5) vs. Oregon (8-4)

Memphis, Tenn.
Missouri (8-4) vs. Oklahoma State (6-6)

Holiday Bowl
San Diego
Northwestern (8-5) vs. Utah (9-4)

Gator Bowl
Jacksonville, Fla.
NC State (9-3) vs. Texas A&M (8-4)

Tuesday, Jan. 1
Outback Bowl
Tampa, Fla.
Mississippi State (9-3) vs. Iowa (8-4)

Citrus Bowl
Orlando, Fla.
Kentucky (9-3) vs. Penn State (9-3)

Fiesta Bowl
Albuquerque, N.M.
LSU (9-3) vs. UCF (12-0)

Rose Bowl
Pasadena, Calif.
Washington (10-3) vs. Ohio State (12-1)

Hugor Bowl
New Orleans
Texas (9-4) vs. Georgia (11-2)

College Football Championship
Cotton Bowl winner vs. Orange Bowl winner

Saturday, Jan. 19
East-West Shrine Classic
East vs. West
NFLPA Collegiate Bowl
At Pasadena, Calif.
American vs. National

Saturday, Jan. 26
Senior Bowl
At Mobile, Ala.
North vs. South

FCS Coaches poll
Final
1. North Dakota State (24*) 1-4 62-3
2. James Madison (1) 1-4 62-3
3. Sam Houston State 12-2 59-9
4. South Dakota State 11-3 57-6
5. Weber State 10-3 50-8
6. Minnesota 12-2 47-11
7. Wofford 10-4 43-9
8. Central Arkansas 10-4 42-7
9. Kansas State 10-2 42-7
10. Jacksonville State 10-3 42-7
11. Stony Brook 8-4 36-10
12. Western Illinois 8-4 35-6
13. Southern Utah 8-3 32-9
14. Grambling State 11-2 29-4
15. New Hampshire 9-5 27-9
16. South Dakota 8-5 23-9
17. Samford 8-4 22-14
18. McNeese 12-2 21-3
19. Northern Iowa 8-5 21-2
20. Furman 8-5 21-2
21. North Carolina 8-4 20-8
22. Eastern Washington 7-4 12-2
23. Middle Tennessee 11-0 12-2
24. Yale 9-1 10-2
25. San Diego 7-2 12-2

Others receiving votes: Monmouth Austin Prep 30, Northern Arizona 23, Delaware 22, CSU 4, Southeastern Louisiana 2, Lehigh 2, Sacramento State 1, Western Carolina 1.

FCS playoffs
Championship
Saturday, Dec. 22
At Toyota Stadium
Frisco, Texas
North Dakota State (14-0) vs. Eastern Washington (12-2)

AFA Division II Coaches poll
Final
1. Valdosta State (Ga.) (33) 14-1 70-2
2. Ferris State (Mich.) 15-1 70-2
3. North Dakota State 13-1 69-9
4. Tarleton State (Texas) 12-1 67-0
5. Duquesne (Pa.) 12-1 66-1
6. Colorado State-Pueblo 12-1 64-6
7. Central Oklahoma (Ind.) 11-2 64-9
8. Texas A&M-Commerce 10-2 54-8
9. North Missouri State 10-2 47-5
10. Indiana State (Ind.) 11-1 47-5
11. Slippery Rock (Pa.) 11-3 41-2
12. Eastern Kentucky 11-1 41-2
13. Grand Valley State (Mich.) 10-2 39-5
14. Western Michigan 10-2 39-5
15. West Chester (Pa.) 10-1 38-1
16. Colorado School of Mines 10-1 38-1
17. Bowling State (Md.) 10-2 33-2
18. New Mexico State 10-1 33-2
19. LIU-Po (N.Y.) 10-1 18-9
20. Fort Hays State (Kan.) 9-3 18-9
21. New Haven (Conn.) 9-3 17-7
22. Wingate (N.C.) 9-4 13-7
23. Western State (Texas) 9-2 11-9
24. Others receiving votes: Kutztown (Pa.) 105, West Alabama, 43, Ohio Dominican, 31, Fairmont State (W.Va.), 14, Missouri S&T, 11, Florida Southern (Fla.), 7, Pittsburg State (Kan.), 6, Chadron State (Nebr.), 3, Central Washington, 3, Virginia Union, 2, Ashland (Ohio), 1, Triffin (Ohio) 1.

AFA Division III Coaches poll
Final
1. Mount Union (Texas) (50) 10-5-0125-0
2. Mount Union (N.Y.) 10-5-0125-0
3. Wisconsin-Whitewater 13-111-18
4. Ohio (Minn.) 12-111-18
5. Johns Hopkins (Md.) 12-111-18
6. North Carolina 12-111-18
7. Hardin-Simmons (Texas) 9-2 81-5
8. Frostburg State (Md.) 10-1 78-8
9. Central Oklahoma 12-1 76-7
10. Muhlenberg (Pa.) 12-1 76-7
11. North Carolina 12-1 76-7
12. Rensselaer (N.Y.) 10-2 70-23
13. Whitworth (Wash.) 10-1 69-2
14. North Carolina 9-2 67-1
15. Centre (Ky.) 9-2 62-42
16. Delaware Valley (Pa.) 9-2 62-11
17. Thomas (Minn.) 9-2 62-11
18. Trinity (Ind.) 9-2 62-11
19. Wittenberg (Pa.) 9-1 25-1
20. North Carolina 9-1 25-1
21. Washington & Jefferson (Pa.) 9-2 23-14
22. North Carolina 9-1 23-14
23. Randolph-Macon (Va.) 9-3 22-5
24. Wisconsin Wesleyan 8-2 21-2
25. Others receiving votes: St. Benedict 173, Wheaton (Ill.) 197, Wartburg (Iowa) 64, Westminster (Md.) 40, Westminster (Conn.) 39, Framingham State (Mass.), 27, Denison (Mo.), 14, Case Western Reserve (Ohio), 12, Trinity (Conn.), 12, Wesleyan (Conn.), 11, Clarksburg (W.Va.), 10, Calicut (Calif.), 8, Hanover (Ind.), 6, MIT (Mass.), 5, Georgia (Ga.), 4, Middle Tennessee (Tenn.), 3, England (Mass.), 5, Amherst (Mass.), 4, Monmouth (N.J.), 4, Eureka (Ill.), 3, Wisconsin, 3, Ohio State, 2, Clark (Ky.), 2, Ithaca (N.Y.), 2, Mount St. Joseph (Ohio), 1, Trinity (Texas) 1.

College basketball

AP Men's Top 25
The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses. Teams in bold through Dec. 16, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through Dec. 16, 10 points for a second-place vote and 5 points for a third-place vote. Last week's rankings:

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. Kansas (6)	9-0	1586	1
2. Duke (5)	11-0	1566	2
3. Tennessee (2)	11-0	1464	3
4. North Carolina (1)	11-0	1464	4
5. Virginia (1)	11-0	1464	5
6. Nevada	11-0	1319	6
7. Auburn	11-0	1319	7
8. Gonzaga	9-2	1147	4
9. North Carolina	9-2	1136	12
10. Michigan State	9-2	1010	9
11. Arizona	9-2	1010	11
12. Texas Tech	10-0	912	11
13. Virginia Tech	10-0	884	13
14. Buffalo	10-0	834	14
15. Ohio State	9-1	647	15
16. Wisconsin	9-1	647	16
17. Mississippi State	9-1	529	18
18. Kentucky	8-2	377	19
19. Marquette	8-2	365	19
20. Indiana	10-0	266	24
21. Iowa	9-2	226	25
22. Furman	12-0	208	23
23. Nebraska	12-0	208	23

Others receiving votes: Oklahoma 115, Miami 98, Kansas State 98, Villanova 52, N.C. State 38, Purdue 20, Utah 17, Iowa 15, Cincinnati 7, Louisville 6, Florida 3, Minnesota 3, Belmont 2, San Francisco 2, NJIT 1.

USA Today Men's Top 25

The top 25 teams in the USA Today men's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses. Teams in bold through Dec. 16, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through Dec. 16, 10 points for a second-place vote and 5 points for a third-place vote. Last week's rankings:

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. Kansas (27)	9-1	709	2
2. Duke (1)	9-0	697	3
3. Tennessee	11-0	690	5
4. Michigan (3)	11-0	678	4
5. Arizona State	9-1	532	8
6. Auburn	9-2	497	6
7. North Carolina	8-2	497	12
8. Texas Tech	9-1	452	10
9. Florida State	9-1	452	10
10. Ohio State	9-1	414	17
11. Virginia	9-1	372	17
12. Mississippi State	9-1	372	17
13. Wisconsin	9-1	372	17
14. North Carolina	9-1	372	17
15. Arizona State	9-1	372	17
16. Iowa	9-2	315	21
17. Marquette	8-2	315	21
18. Texas Tech	8-2	315	21
19. Furman	12-0	82	23

Others receiving votes: Indiana 62, Oklahoma 58, St. John's 51, Kansas 45, Villanova 35, Cincinnati 28, TC 24, North Carolina 23, Belmont 18, Texas Tech 7, Florida 6, Louisville 6, Purdue 3, Belmont 2.

Monday's men's scores

EAST
Cornell 70, Longwood 64
Scranton 106, Manhattanville 75
SOUTH
Augusta 81, Young Harris 70
North Carolina 85, St. John's 51
Bethel (Tenn.) 71, Lindsey Wilson 62
Blackburn 87, Rhodes 78
East Baptist (Mo.) 79, Pittsburg State 75
Davis & Elkins 80, Greenville 57
Florida State 85, SE Missouri 68
West Virginia 85, Georgia 69
High Point 80, NC Wesleyan 85
Kentucky Christian 123, Cincinnati 78

MIDWEST
Kentucky 91, Clark Atlanta 88
Kentucky 91, Clark Atlanta 88
Lipscomb 111, Covenant 48
North Carolina 85, St. John's 51
SC-Aiken 99, Clayton 76
Samford 85, Houston Baptist 61
Vanderbilt 81, Arizona 65
Wake Forest 87, Davidson 77
Ball St. 77, Valparaiso 61
Drake 79, SIU-Edwardsville 66
St. Louis 81, St. Louis 81
Mount Mercy 82, Waldorf 76
N. Illinois 91, W. Illinois 76
North Central (Ill.) 77, Albion 58
Northwestern 88, Chicago 42
UIC 63, Incarnate Word 57
UTSA 101, Bethany (Kan.) 77

WEST
Montana 60, N. Dakota 53
New Mexico 74, N. Dakota 62
Seattle 67, Portland 56
St. Mary's 82, St. Mary's 82
Washington State 94, Rider 80

AP Men's Top 25 schedule

Wednesday's games
No. 3 Tennessee vs. Samford
No. 17 Mississippi State vs. Wake Forest
No. 7 Auburn vs. N.C. State
No. 11 Florida State vs. N.C. A&T
No. 17 Mississippi State vs. Wake Forest
No. 17 Mississippi State vs. Wake Forest
Thursday's games
No. 2 Duke vs. No. 12 Texas Tech at Madison Square Garden

Madison Square Garden
No. 21 Houston vs. Utah State
No. 8 Gonzaga vs. Denver
No. 10 North Carolina vs. Oakland
No. 14 Buffalo at No. 20 Marquette
No. 24 Furman at LSU

Friday's games
No. 1 Kansas at No. 18 Arizona State
No. 17 Mississippi State vs. Wake Forest
No. 4 Michigan vs. Air Force
No. 6 Virginia vs. South & Mary
No. 6 Nevada vs. Auburn
No. 7 Auburn vs. Murray State
No. 10 North Carolina vs. 19 Kentucky at the United Center
No. 11 Florida State vs. Saint Louis at the BBOT Center, Sunrise, Fla.
No. 10 Ohio State vs. UCLA at the United Center
No. 16 Wisconsin vs. Grambling State
No. 17 Mississippi State vs. Wright State at Mississippi Coliseum, Jackson, Miss.
No. 22 Indiana vs. Jacksonville
No. 23 Iowa vs. Savannah State
No. 25 Nebraska vs. Cal State Fullerton
Saturday's game
No. 21 Houston vs. Coppin State

AP Women's Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' women's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses. Teams in bold through Dec. 16, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through Dec. 16, 10 points for a second-place vote and 5 points for a third-place vote. Last week's rankings:

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. UConn (31)	9-0	775	1
2. Notre Dame	9-1	738	2
3. North Carolina	10-0	712	3
5. South Carolina	10-0	612	5
6. Baylor	8-1	585	3
7. Oregon	8-1	585	11
8. North Carolina	10-0	558	8
9. Tennessee	8-2	510	10
10. Oregon State	8-2	429	8
11. Connecticut	8-2	386	12
12. Minnesota	10-0	387	13
13. California	9-2	386	12
14. Texas Tech	9-2	337	15
15. Iowa	8-2	303	16
16. Arizona State	9-2	303	16
17. Kentucky	10-1	215	18
18. North Carolina	10-1	191	19
19. DePaul	7-3	185	20
20. Gonzaga	9-1	134	23
21. Texas A&M	8-2	98	24
22. Washington	8-2	98	24
23. South Carolina	6-4	66	25
24. West Virginia	5-10	10	26
25. South Dakota 22, Florida 21, Virginia Tech 21, South Florida 19, Missouri 13, Indiana 12, North Carolina 11, Kentucky 10, West Virginia 10, Drake 10, Iowa 10.			

Monday's women's scores

EAST
Kent St. 76, St. Bonaventure 64
Syracuse 54, Niagara 45
SOUTH
Appalachian St. 94, Wake Forest 70
Arkansas 62, Tennessee 50
Belmont 67, Chattanooga 51
Berea 118, Mary of the Woods 66
Chowdhury 66, Augustana 51
Cincinnati Christian 80, Kentucky Christian 43
Florida Gulf Coast 81, Abilene Christian 65
Georgia 82, Georgia 82
Louisiana 76, Virginia 51
McNeese 106, Southern No 54
North Carolina 85, Missouri 72
North Alabama 86, MSU 72
Pittsburg State 79, Pittsburg State 79
SC-Aiken 67, Clayton 58
St. John's 85, Louisiana 62
South Alabama 97, Faulkner 40
South Florida 102, Vermont 55
UCF 64, St. Louis 76
Wake Forest 50, James Madison 49
West Florida 76, Lee 42

MIDWEST</

NBA

Roundup

Giannis, Bucks hold off Pistons

Associated Press

DETROIT — Giannis Antetokounmpo was called for two quick fouls, and with 9:02 remaining in the first quarter, he went to the bench.

When he returned, there was still plenty of time for the Milwaukee star to make an impact.

"No matter how many fouls I have, I've got to be aggressive. If I get the third one, I get the third one," Antetokounmpo said. "Whenever I stop being aggressive, I don't make plays."

Antetokounmpo made plenty of plays down the stretch, finishing with 32 points and 12 rebounds, and the Bucks held on for a 107-104 victory over the Detroit Pistons on Monday night when Blake Griffin missed a last-second three-pointer.

Griffin actually missed two shots in the final 14 seconds. The Detroit star already had a triple-double after three quarters, but it was a difficult fourth for him. Griffin finished with 19 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds, but he also had 10 turnovers.

Rockets 122, Jazz 97: James Harden scored 31 points to help host Houston hold off Utah for its fourth straight win.

It was the Rockets' first victory over the Jazz in three meetings this season. Their current winning streak comes after a three-game skid.

Houston led by double digits early in the fourth quarter, but poor shooting left the Rockets tied with about two minutes left. A three-pointer by Harden put Houston back on top and he added two free throws with about a minute remaining to make it 99-94.

Warriors 110, Grizzlies 93: Stephen Curry had 20 points and seven rebounds to lead host Golden State past Memphis.

Curry became the fifth player in Warriors history to score 15,000 points during the regular season, joining Walt Chamberlain, Rick Barry, Paul Arizin and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

Kevin Durant had 23 points and passed Larry Bird (21,791) for 33rd place on the NBA's all-time scoring list.

reer scoring list.

Trail Blazers 131, Clippers 127: Damian Lillard scored 22 of his 39 points in a dominant third quarter and visiting Portland defeated Los Angeles.

Lillard hit five of his six three-pointers in the third when the Trail Blazers outscored the Clippers 42-28.

Tobias Harris matched Lillard with a career-high 39 points for the Clippers, who have lost four in a row for the first time this season.

Spurs 123, 76ers 96: Rudy Gay had 21 points and LaMarcus Aldridge and DeMar DeRozan each added 20 as host San Antonio defeated Philadelphia.

The Spurs bounced back after squandering a 21-point lead in a loss to Chicago on Saturday night and held an opponent to less than 100 points for the fifth straight game.

Thunder 121, Bulls 96: Paul George scored 16 of his 24 points in the final five minutes of the first half and host Oklahoma City rolled past Chicago.

George outburst came in the last 4:47 of the second quarter as the Thunder outscored the Bulls 23-7 and built a 64-44 lead at the break. He scored just one point in the second half.

Russell Westbrook had 13 points, 16 rebounds and 11 steals for his 111th career triple-double.

Timberwolves 132, Kings 105: Karl-Anthony Towns had 14 points and 14 assists in just 21 minutes. Andrew Wiggins scored 17 and host Minnesota got a big boost from its bench in beating road-weary Sacramento.

Minnesota led by 36 in the first half against Sacramento, which was coming off a 120-113 victory at Dallas a night earlier.

Suns 128, Knicks 110: Devin Booker tied his season high with 38 points. T.J. Warren scored 17 of his 26 during his team's 41-point third quarter and Phoenix beat host New York for its third straight victory.

Deandre Ayton finished with 21 points and 13 rebounds for the Suns.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	23	9	.719	—
Philadelphia	20	12	.625	3
Boston	18	11	.621	3½
Brooklyn	13	18	.419	9½
New York	9	25	.261	14

Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Charlotte	14	15	.483	—
Orlando	14	15	.483	—
Miami	13	16	.448	1
Washington	12	18	.400	1½
Atlanta	6	23	.207	8

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	20	9	.690	—
Indiana	20	10	.667	1
San Antonio	14	20	.413	6
Cleveland	7	23	.233	13½
Chicago	7	24	.226	14

Western Conference

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	15	13	.536	—
Memphis	16	14	.533	—
Houston	15	14	.517	—
San Antonio	15	15	.500	—
New Orleans	15	16	.484	1½

Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	19	6	.760	—
Oklahoma City	19	6	.760	—
Portland	18	7	.724	½
Minnesota	14	16	.467	6½
Utah	17	15	.529	7

Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	15	13	.536	—
LA Clippers	17	13	.567	—
Phoenix	17	14	.550	—
San Antonio	17	14	.550	—
Golden State	17	14	.550	—

Sunday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn 144, Atlanta 122				
Washington 128, LA Lakers 110				
San Antonio 102, New Orleans 96				
Sacramento 120, Dallas 113				
Denver 107, Portland 104				

Monday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee 107, Detroit 104				
LA Lakers at Brooklyn				
Houston 102, Utah 97				
Minnesota 132, Sacramento 105				
Oklahoma City 121, Chicago 96				
San Antonio 123, Memphis 96				
Golden State 110, Memphis 93				
Portland 131, LA Clippers 127				

Tuesday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Lakers at Brooklyn				
Washington at Atlanta				
LA Clippers at Portland				
Phoenix at Denver				

Wednesday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland at Charlotte				
New York at Milwaukee				
San Antonio at Orlando				
Indiana at Philadelphia				
Phoenix at Boston				
Chicago at Detroit				
Cleveland at Minnesota				
New Orleans at Atlanta				
Washington at Houston				
Golden State at Utah				
Memphis at Portland				
Oklahoma City at Sacramento				
Houston at Miami				
Dallas at LA Clippers				

Thursday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Lakers at Atlanta				
Washington at Houston				
Golden State at Utah				
Memphis at Portland				
Oklahoma City at Sacramento				
Houston at Miami				
Dallas at LA Clippers				

Friday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Lakers at Atlanta				
Washington at Houston				
Golden State at Utah				
Memphis at Portland				
Oklahoma City at Sacramento				
Houston at Miami				
Dallas at LA Clippers				

Saturday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Lakers at Atlanta				
Washington at Houston				
Golden State at Utah				
Memphis at Portland				
Oklahoma City at Sacramento				
Houston at Miami				
Dallas at LA Clippers				

Sunday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Lakers at Atlanta				
Washington at Houston				
Golden State at Utah				
Memphis at Portland				
Oklahoma City at Sacramento				
Houston at Miami				
Dallas at LA Clippers				

Monday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Lakers at Atlanta				
Washington at Houston				
Golden State at Utah				
Memphis at Portland				
Oklahoma City at Sacramento				
Houston at Miami				
Dallas at LA Clippers				

Tuesday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Lakers at Atlanta				
Washington at Houston				
Golden State at Utah				
Memphis at Portland				
Oklahoma City at Sacramento				
Houston at Miami				
Dallas at LA Clippers				

Wednesday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Lakers at Atlanta				
Washington at Houston				
Golden State at Utah				
Memphis at Portland				
Oklahoma City at Sacramento				
Houston at Miami				
Dallas at LA Clippers				

Thursday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Lakers at Atlanta				
Washington at Houston				
Golden State at Utah				
Memphis at Portland				
Oklahoma City at Sacramento				
Houston at Miami				
Dallas at LA Clippers				

Friday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Lakers at Atlanta				
Washington at Houston				
Golden State at Utah				
Memphis at Portland				
Oklahoma City at Sacramento				
Houston at Miami				
Dallas at LA Clippers				

Saturday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Lakers at Atlanta				
Washington at Houston				
Golden State at Utah				
Memphis at Portland				
Oklahoma City at Sacramento				
Houston at Miami				
Dallas at LA Clippers				

Sunday's games				
	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Lakers at Atlanta				
Washington at Houston				
Golden State at Utah				
Memphis at Portland				
Oklahoma City at Sacramento				
Houston at Miami				
Dallas at LA Clippers				



The Spurs' DeMar DeRozan shoots as he is defended by 76ers T.J. Harris. McCollum, left, Mike Muscala, right, and Wilson Chandler, near, during the second half on Monday. San Antonio won 123-96.

Spurs 123, 76ers 96

PHILADELPHIA — Butler 31-10-6, Chandler 2-7-2-2, Embiid 6-17-15, Simmons 7-10-22-6, Redick 7-11-10-6, Ponder 1-0-0-0, Muscala 4-6-11-0, Harris 5-1-2-4, Eubanks 3-4-4-0, Bertans 4-5-5-16, Poeltl 3-2-2-8, Mills 2-4-2-8, White 4-9-0-8, Bellinelli 2-6-6-6. Totals: 48-87-16-17-123.

PHILADELPHIA — Butler 31-10-6, Chandler 2-7-2-2, Embiid 6-17-15, Simmons 7-10-22-6, Redick 7-11-10-6, Ponder 1-0-0-0, Muscala 4-6-11-0, Harris 5-1-2-4, Eubanks 3-4-4-0, Bertans 4-5-5-16, Poeltl 3-2-2-8, Mills 2-4-2-8, White 4-9-0-8, Bellinelli 2-6-6-6. Totals: 48-87-16-17-123.

PHILADELPHIA — Butler 31-10-6, Chandler 2-7-2-2, Embiid 6-17-15, Simmons 7-10-22-6, Redick 7-11-10-6, Ponder 1-0-0-0, Muscala 4-6-11-0, Harris 5-1-2-4, Eubanks 3-4-4-0, Bertans 4-5-5-16, Poeltl 3-2-2-8, Mills 2-4-2-8, White 4-9-0-8, Bellinelli 2-6-6-6. Totals: 48-87-16-17-123.

Timberwolves 132, Kings 105

SACRAMENTO — Bogdanovic 2-7-0-5, Bellicek 2-0-0-0, Cauley-Stein 0-2-1-3, Fox 0-0-0-0, Field 7-13-2-21, Jackson 4-7-0-11, Labissiere 3-6-12-9, Giles 11-5-9-21-3, Koufos 2-8-0-1-4, Ferrell 6-9-3-5, Mason 5-9-1-12, McLemore 1-8-4-7, T.Williams 8-8-0-6, Totals: 38-88-23-105.

SACRAMENTO — Bogdanovic 2-7-0-5, Bellicek 2-0-0-0, Cauley-Stein 0-2-1-3, Fox 0-0-0-0, Field 7-13-2-21, Jackson 4-7-0-11, Labissiere 3-6-12-9, Giles 11-5-9-21-3, Koufos 2-8-0-1-4, Ferrell 6-9-3-5, Mason 5-9-1-12, McLemore 1-8-4-7, T.Williams 8-8-0-6, Totals: 38-88-23-105.

SACRAMENTO — Bogdanovic 2-7-0-5, Bellicek 2-0-0-0, Cauley-Stein 0-2-1-3, Fox 0-0-0-0, Field 7-13-2-21, Jackson 4-7-0-11, Labissiere 3-6-12-9, Giles 11-5-9-21-3, Koufos 2-8-0-1-4, Ferrell 6-9-3-5, Mason 5-9-1-12, McLemore 1-8-4-7, T.Williams 8-8-0-6, Totals: 38-88-23-105.

Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo, right, charges into Pistons forward Blake Griffin during the first half on Monday in Detroit.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Hausers give Marquette an early boost

By GENARO C. ARMAS
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — There have been times when guard Markus Howard can't tell Marquette teammates Sam and Joey Hauser apart.

They have similar builds and games, along with a familiarity on the floor that comes with playing a lot of basketball together.

The brotherly bond has given a boost to the 20th-ranked Golden Eagles, who are off to an 8-2 start while weathering nonconference tests.

"The fact that they're related — for one they look just alike, I always get them confused," said Howard, the team's leading scorer. "But the fact that they've played together for so long, and they kind of know each other's tendencies, it really shows on the court."

Sam, a junior, is the elder Hauser, a 6-foot-8 forward who is averaging 14.1 points and 7.0 rebounds going into Tuesday's game against North Dakota. What he lacks in flash, he makes up for in consistency and the ability to fill multiple roles.

His 13 points and career-high 14 rebounds in 41 minutes in an overtime win over Wisconsin might have been one of the best games of his career. Hauser also had four assists and a steal with no turnovers.

"In my opinion, Sam is one of the most underappreciated players in the United States. Sam is all about winning," said Steve Wojciechowski said after the 74-69 victory over the Badgers on Dec. 8. "He's an absolute joy to coach."

Sam Hauser has started since his freshman year, much like what his brother is doing now.

A touted recruit who helped his high school in Stevens Point, Wis., win three straight state titles, Joey Hauser ended up enrolling at Marquette for the spring 2018 semester after an ankle injury sidelined him for his senior prep season.

Getting to the Marquette campus early aided in his recovery after being able to work with the team's trainers, not to mention the opportunity to assimilate early to college life and practice ahead of an important 2018-19 season. Playing home games at a new downtown arena, the Golden Eagles have the talent and depth to contend in the Big East and return to the NCAA Tournament for the second time in three seasons.

"In high school, you can get away with some things that you can't get away with in college," Sam Hauser said in the preseason. "We were the biggest ones in high school. Now if you look at our team, we're right in the middle of the pack. The play style is different, the speed."



LAURENCE KESTERSON (ABOVE), FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Marquette guard Sam Hauser, above, is averaging 14.1 points and 7.0 rebounds this season. Freshman Joey Hauser, below, has scored in double figures in six of his 10 games. The play of the Hauser brothers has helped 20th-ranked Marquette navigate some early nonconference tests to get off to an 8-2 start.



They know each other's strengths and weaknesses, though they might not divulge the latter in public.

"On the court, it just helps us play off each other. We're looking for each other on the court. We both know that we can shoot the ball if we're open," Joey Hauser said.

He also knows to feed Sam down low. And there might even be a pass back out to the perimeter, if Joey is open.

"You've got to get the ball to him and get the ball into the post," the younger Hauser said. "It's playing off each other and playing off our teammates ... something we think we're definitely good at."

The 6-9 Joey Hauser (10.7 points, 5.3 rebounds) seems to be getting acclimated quite nicely. He showed poise against the Badgers with 15 points on 5-for-8 shooting, including 3-for-5 from the three-point arc while sometimes being guarded by preseason All-American big man Ethan Happ.

It's not unusual to Sam, though. The brothers have seen each other hit big shots from everywhere — from the playground to the Fiserv Forum.

"We still have that chemistry between us being brothers, knowing what our strengths and weaknesses are," Joey Hauser said. "That will always be the same."

Top 25 roundup

Balanced Vanderbilt beats Arizona State

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Vanderbilt used a 12-day break for final exams to figure out how to play without freshman Darius Garland.

Saben Lee scored 14 points to lead five players in double figures and sharp-shooting Vanderbilt beat No. 18 Arizona State 81-65 on Monday night.

Vanderbilt snapped an eight-game skid against ranked opponents that dated to an overtime win over Florida in the 2017 Southeastern Conference Tournament. The Commodores (7-2) also beat Arizona State for the first time in five tries on the Sun Devils' first visit to Memorial Gym.

They did it without Garland, a touted freshman who tore the meniscus in his left knee in a loss to Kent State on Nov. 23.

"It's huge for us," Vanderbilt junior forward Yanni Wetzell said. "We obviously lost a critical piece a couple weeks back and to get this win that just shows the resilience of this team and that we can put the next man up mentality. And I think we definitely showed that tonight."

The Commodores had a big

night from beyond the arc, hitting six of 12 from deep in the first half and 12 of 28 for the game.

Aaron Nesmith added 13 points off the bench for Vanderbilt. Wetzell had 12, and Matt Ryan and Joe Toye had 11 each. The Commodores' bench outscored Arizona State's 36-21.

Arizona State, which moved up two spots in the AP Top 25 earlier Monday, has lost two of three.

"We got to get back home, get back to the drawing board, watch the film and see how we can be more effective offensively," Arizona State coach Bobby Hurley said. "It's hard to put that much pressure on your defense, especially on the road. We didn't make shots. We shot 32 percent, and that's not going to win you a lot of games."

No. 11 Florida State 85, Southeast Missouri 68: Trent Forrest scored a career high 23 points and freshman Devin Vas-sell added 16 as the host Seminoles recovered from a sluggish first half.

Forrest shot 8-for-12 from the floor, and had a team-high eight rebounds and four assists to help Florida State (9-1) win its fourth straight and its 30th straight non-conference home win.



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

Vanderbilt forward Simisola Shittu, left, and guard Saben Lee celebrate after upsetting Arizona State on Monday in Nashville, Tenn.

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NHL



KEITH SRANOCHE/AP

Anaheim Ducks goaltender John Gibson, left, stops a shot by the Penguins' Zach Aston-Reese during the second period of Monday's game in Pittsburgh. Gibson stopped 28 shots in the Ducks' 4-2 victory.

Roundup

Ducks top Penguins, win for 9th time in 10 games

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH—The Anaheim Ducks would love to stop playing from behind. It's just not happening. And somehow it's not a problem, either. Particularly on the road.

The Ducks spotted the Pittsburgh Penguins two first-period goals and then roared back for a 4-2 victory on Monday for their ninth win in 10 games. Adam Henrique and Ryan Getzlaf each had a goal and an assist as Anaheim got its sixth straight road win, tied for the second-longest in franchise history.

"Sometimes when you get in other buildings, it's tough when a couple bounces don't go your way early," Getzlaf said. "It's a little bit of an uphill battle. I thought tonight, we did a good job of just staying with our plan, executing with the puck a little bit better obviously in the second period. We got going as the game went on."

Ondrej Kase and Kiefer Sherwood also scored for the Ducks, who have won three straight over the Penguins. John Gibson, a Pittsburgh native, stopped 28 shots, including the final 24 he faced. He called Anaheim's dominant second period — when the Ducks scored three times to move in front — perhaps his best of the season. Gibson did the rest of the work in the third, turning aside two Pittsburgh power plays to win his in hometown for the second consecutive year.

"We learned the team that we can be," Gibson said. "I think we're starting to put it together here now. Maybe it wasn't the best start, but I think we just have the ability to stay composed and know that we have the ability to come back."

Ernst Malmgren got his 11th goal of the season for Pittsburgh and Bryan Rust added his sixth but the Penguins couldn't cool off the Ducks. Casey DeSmith finished with 32 saves but lost for only the third time in his last 11 starts after letting a two-goal lead slip away for a third straight game. Pittsburgh recovered to beat Boston and Los Angeles last week. Not this time.

"If a team goes down a couple goals, they push back and that's what they did," DeSmith said. "Maybe next time just withstand it a little bit better

and push back sooner."

Blue Jackets 1, Golden Knights 0: Nick Foligno scored 40 seconds into the third period, Sergei Bobrovsky made 28 saves and host Columbus beat Vegas.

Foligno found the rebound after Seth Jones' shot and knocked it past goalie Malcolm Subban from the doorstep.

Bobrovsky got his 25th career shutout and first this season. He repelled a late attack by the Golden Knights after Subban was pulled for an extra skater with a minute left.

Islanders 4, Avalanche 1: Goaltender Thomas Greiss bottled up Colorado's fast-flying offense and Johnny Boychuk scored his first goal of the season for visiting New York.

Jordan Eberle and Anders Lee also scored while Valtteri Filppula added an empty-net goal as the Islanders began a four-game trip in fine fashion. Greiss made 30 saves and helped put an end to Mikko Rantanen's string of 14 straight games with at least a point. The streak was tied for the Avalanche's third-longest since the team moved to town in 1995-96.

Gabriel Landeskog scored Colorado's only goal.

Senators 4, Predators 3 (OT): Thomas Chabot scored 21 seconds into overtime and host Ottawa recovered after blowing a three-goal lead.

Ottawa led 3-0 after the first period, but Roman Josi got two goals and Craig Smith also scored to tie it for Nashville.

Maxime Lajoie, Brady Tkachuk and Ryan Dzingel scored for the Senators, who handed Nashville its first loss against an Eastern Conference opponent. Craig Anderson stopped 31 shots.

Bruins 4, Canadiens 0: Jaroslav Halak stopped 22 shots for his third shutout of the season and visiting Boston beat Montreal.

Joakim Nordstrom, Colby Cave, David Krejci and Brad Marchand scored for the Bruins, who snapped a two-game skid. Boston was on the second game of a back-to-back after losing 4-2 in Buffalo on Sunday.

Halak improved to 5-0-0 when facing former teammates Carey Price, and helped the Bruins leapfrog the Canadiens for the first wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Buffalo	34	27	6	1	52	128	97
Tampa Bay	34	20	9	5	45	105	98
Toronto	33	21	10	2	44	117	93
Boston	34	18	12	4	40	94	88
Montreal	34	17	12	5	39	108	111
Ottawa	35	16	14	4	34	116	135
Detroit	34	14	15	5	33	98	115
Florida	31	13	13	5	30	101	113

Metropolitan Division

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	34	21	9	4	43	122	100
Columbus	33	18	12	3	39	108	105
N.Y. Islanders	32	16	12	4	36	93	92
Pittsburgh	33	15	12	6	36	112	108
N.Y. Rangers	32	14	13	5	33	94	106
Carolina	32	14	14	4	33	84	93
New Jersey	31	11	13	7	29	94	111
Philadelphia	31	12	15	4	28	93	116

Western Conference

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	33	22	9	2	46	121	94
Nashville	34	22	10	2	46	107	86
Colorado	34	18	10	6	42	122	106
Minnesota	32	17	13	2	36	101	91
Dallas	33	16	14	3	35	92	89
St. Louis	31	12	15	4	28	88	107
Chicago	35	10	18	6	26	99	135

Pacific Division

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Calgary	34	22	10	2	46	122	93
Anaheim	35	19	11	5	43	93	100
San Jose	34	18	11	5	41	103	95
Vegas	36	19	15	2	40	107	102
Edmonton	34	16	13	5	39	98	101
Vancouver	36	16	16	4	36	110	118
Arizona	32	14	13	5	30	81	89
Los Angeles	34	11	20	3	25	75	106

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Sunday's games

Vegas 4, N.Y. Rangers 3, OT	Calgary 7, St. Louis 2
Winnipeg 5, Tampa Bay 4, OT	San Jose 7, Chicago 3
Colorado 1, Vegas 0	Columbus 1, Edmonton 2

Monday's games

Ottawa 4, Nashville 3, OT	N.Y. Islanders 4, Colorado 1
Nashville at Chicago	St. Louis at Edmonton
N.Y. Islanders at Arizona	Tampa Bay at Vancouver
Winnipeg at Los Angeles	

Tuesday's games

Boston at Philadelphia	Toronto at New Jersey
Anaheim at N.Y. Rangers	San Jose at Minnesota
Calgary at Dallas	Nashville at Chicago
St. Louis at Edmonton	N.Y. Islanders at Arizona
Tampa Bay at Vancouver	Winnipeg at Los Angeles

Wednesday's games

Pittsburgh at Washington	Montreal at Colorado
Minnesota at Philadelphia	Chicago at Dallas
Arizona at Tampa Bay	Calgary at St. Louis
Vancouver at Vegas	Winnipeg at San Jose

Thursday's games

Detroit at Carolina	Anaheim at Boston
New Jersey at Columbus	Florida at Toronto
Montreal at Philadelphia	Chicago at Dallas
Tampa Bay at Calgary	St. Louis at Vancouver
N.Y. Islanders at Vegas	Winnipeg at San Jose

Friday's games

Montreal at Colorado	Chicago at Dallas
Tampa Bay at Calgary	St. Louis at Vancouver
N.Y. Islanders at Vegas	Winnipeg at San Jose

Saturday's games

Montreal at Colorado	Chicago at Dallas
Tampa Bay at Calgary	St. Louis at Vancouver
N.Y. Islanders at Vegas	Winnipeg at San Jose

Sunday's games

Vegas 4, N.Y. Rangers 3, OT	Calgary 7, St. Louis 2
Winnipeg 5, Tampa Bay 4, OT	San Jose 7, Chicago 3
Colorado 1, Vegas 0	Columbus 1, Edmonton 2

Monday's games

Ottawa 4, Nashville 3, OT	N.Y. Islanders 4, Colorado 1
Nashville at Chicago	St. Louis at Edmonton
N.Y. Islanders at Arizona	Tampa Bay at Vancouver
Winnipeg at Los Angeles	

Tuesday's games

Boston at Philadelphia	Toronto at New Jersey
Anaheim at N.Y. Rangers	San Jose at Minnesota
Calgary at Dallas	Nashville at Chicago
St. Louis at Edmonton	N.Y. Islanders at Arizona
Tampa Bay at Vancouver	Winnipeg at Los Angeles

Wednesday's games

Pittsburgh at Washington	Montreal at Colorado
Minnesota at Philadelphia	Chicago at Dallas
Arizona at Tampa Bay	Calgary at St. Louis
Vancouver at Vegas	Winnipeg at San Jose

Thursday's games

Detroit at Carolina	Anaheim at Boston
New Jersey at Columbus	Florida at Toronto
Montreal at Philadelphia	Chicago at Dallas
Tampa Bay at Calgary	St. Louis at Vancouver
N.Y. Islanders at Vegas	Winnipeg at San Jose

Friday's games

Montreal at Colorado	Chicago at Dallas
Tampa Bay at Calgary	St. Louis at Vancouver
N.Y. Islanders at Vegas	Winnipeg at San Jose

Ducks 4, Penguins 2

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Anaheim	0	3	1	4	0	2	0
Pittsburgh	0	2	0	2	0	0	2
Edmonton	0	1	0	1	0	1	0

First Period—1, Pittsburgh, 2-0 (Kessel, Letang), 9:38 (pp), 2, Pittsburgh, 2-0 (Kessel, Letang), 14:21 (pp).

Second Period—3, Anaheim, Henrique 7 (Richie, Sprang), 2:07 (pp), 4, Anaheim, Sherwood 4 (Rowney, Manson), 5:39, 5, Anaheim, Kase 9 (Getzlaf), 18:47.

Third Period—5, Anaheim, Getzlaf 9 (Aberg, Henrique), 19:11.

Shots on goal—Anaheim 11-18-7-36, Pittsburgh 8-9-13-30.

Power-play opportunities—Anaheim 1 of 2; Pittsburgh 1 of 4.

Goalies—Anaheim, Gibson 15-9-4 (30 shots-30 saves); Pittsburgh, DeSmith 10-6-4 (35-32).

A—16,575 (18,387), T—2:24.

Senators 4, Predators 3 (OT)

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	0	2	0	2	0	0	2
Ottawa	3	0	0	1	0	1	0

First Period—1, Ottawa, Lajoie (Batherson, Boediger), 2:25 (pp), 2, Ottawa, Tkachuk 10 (Stone, White), 5:22, 3, Ottawa, Dzingel 13 (Stone), 19:48.

Second Period—4, Nashville, Josi 6 (Johansen, Ellis), 5:37 (pp).

Third Period—5, Nashville, C. Smith 10 (Johansen, Josi), 0:46 (pp), 6, Nashville, Josi 7 (Fiala, Ellis), 11:07 (pp).

Overtime—7, Ottawa, Chabot 10 (Dzingel), 0:21.

Shots on goal—Nashville 9-15-10-34, Ottawa 11-7-4-1-23.

Power-play opportunities—Nashville 2 of 5; Ottawa 1 of 3.

Goalies—Nashville, Rinne 14-5-11 (22 shots-22 saves), Saros 8-5-1 (12-11), Ottawa, Anderson 14-12-3 (34-31).

A—21,302 (21,288), T—2:22.

Bruins 4, Canadiens 0

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Montreal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

First Period—1, Boston, Nordstrom 5 (Caban, Cave), 2:21.

Second Period—2, Boston, Cave 1 (McAvoy, Pastnak), 19:24.

Third Period—3, Boston, Krejci 6 (McAvoy, 0:46, 4, Boston, Marchand 11 (Krug, Pastnak), 5:06 (pp).

Shots on goal—Boston 13-13-9-35, Montreal 5-8-9-22.

Power-play opportunities—Boston 1 of 3; Montreal 0 of 3.

Goalies—Boston, Halak 10-5-2 (22 shots-22 saves), Montreal, Price 13-9-4 (25-21).

A—21,302 (21,288), T—2:22.

Islanders 4, Avalanche 1

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
N.Y. Islanders	0	2	1	4	0	0	1
Colorado	0	1	0	0	1	0	1

First Period—1, N.Y. Islanders, Eberle 7 (Nelson, Lee), 18:20.

Second Period—2, N.Y. Islanders, Boychuk 1 (Pulock, Bales), 2:07 (pp), 3, Colorado, Landeskog 12 (Barrie, MacKinnon), 6:45 (pp), 4, N.Y. Islanders, Lee 12 (Ledy, Eberle), 18:25 (pp).

Third Period—5, N.Y. Islanders, Filppula 8 (Pulock), 17:36.

Shots on goal—N.Y. Islanders 7-7-7-21, Colorado 11-12-8-31.

Power-play opportunities—N.Y. Islanders 2 of 4; Colorado 1 of 5.

Goalies—N.Y. Islanders, Greiss 12-6-1 (31 shots-30 saves), Colorado, Varlamov 11-8-3 (20-17).

A—15,066 (18,007), T—2:31.

Scoring leaders

Sean Kilpatrick, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP



Senators right wing Bobby Ryan fights Nashville Predators center Kyle Turris, right, during Monday's game in Ottawa, Ontario.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL/NFL

Briefs

Georgia QB Fields plans to transfer

Associated Press

Georgia freshman quarterback Justin Fields has informed Bulldogs coaches he plans to transfer, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Monday night.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because Fields, the former five-star recruit, had yet to formally notify No. 6 Georgia of his intention to leave. Under new NCAA rules, players no longer request permission from a school to transfer. Now an athlete submits a notification paperwork, which results in the athlete's name being placed in an NCAA-run database of available transfers.

Another person with access to the database told AP Fields' name was not listed as of Monday night. That person spoke on condition of anonymity because the database is not public.

USA Today first reported Fields intends to transfer.

Georgia spokesman Claude Felton told the AP in an email the school and coach Kirby Smart would have no comment Monday night on Fields.

NCAA rules would require Fields to sit out next season if he transfers, though he could request a waiver to become immediately eligible if he can show some sort of hardship he would endure by staying at Georgia.

Fields was one of the most highly rated recruits in the country in the signing class of 2018. The Georgia native from Kennesaw, northwest of Atlanta, decided to stay in his home state and sign with the Bulldogs, despite the presence of quarterback Jake Fromm on the roster.

Fromm led Georgia to a Southeastern Conference championship and an appearance in the national title game last season as a freshman. This year Fields was expected to push Fromm for playing time, but he was firmly entrenched as a backup.

Fields played in all 12 games, completing 27 of 39 passes for 328 yards with four touchdowns, and he ran for 266 yards and four touchdowns, but his most significant playing time came in lopsided victories against non-sports opponents.

Fromm, meanwhile, developed into one of the best quarterbacks in the country. The sophomore is third in the nation in passer efficiency rating (175.8) with 2,537 yards, 27 touchdowns passes and four interceptions.

Fromm will be a junior next season and will be eligible to enter the NFL draft in 2020.

Tagovailoa 'probably ahead of schedule'

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Alabama coach Nick Saban says quarterback Tua Tagovailoa is "probably ahead of schedule" in recovering from ankle surgery.

The Heisman Trophy runner-up has been practicing for the top-ranked Crimson Tide, which began preparations Friday for an Orange Bowl semifinal matchup with Oklahoma.

Tagovailoa had surgery on his left ankle shortly after the Dec. 1 Southeastern Conference game during which he sustained a high ankle sprain on the first drive against Georgia. He played much of the way on the injury but had his worst game of the season.

Tagovailoa left in the fourth quarter after his own offensive lineman came down on his right foot.

Saban says Tagovailoa has been able to take a lot of practice repetitions, throw from the pocket and run. He doesn't think the quarterback has "100 percent change of direction yet."

Stanford RB Love to skip bowl game

STANFORD, Calif. — Stanford running back Bryce Love will skip the Sun Bowl to prepare for the NFL Draft.

Love announced his decision on Monday to sit out the bowl game for the Cardinal (8-4) on Dec. 31 against Pittsburgh (7-6). Love says he wants to be completely healthy for the 2019 draft.

Love had a rough senior season after deciding to bypass the 2018 draft after finishing as Heisman Trophy runner-up. He was slowed by injuries and finished with 739 yards on 166 carries. That was down significantly from the previous season when he ran for 2,118 yards and averaged 8.1 yards per carry. Love also set an FBS record with 13 runs of at least 50 yards.

On AFN

Frisco Bowl

San Diego St. (7-5) vs. Ohio (8-4)

2 a.m. Thursday, CET;

10 a.m. Thursday, JKT, AFN-Sports

Top players: San Diego State:

Junior LB Kiyah Tezino has 120 tackles, including 14½ tackles for loss with 8½ sacks. Ohio: Senior RB A. Queete has rushed for 1,142 yards, ranking second in the MAC at 95.2 yards per game, with 12 TDs. He is only fourth player in school history with multiple 1,000-yard rushing seasons.

Notable: San Diego State: 13-0-1 all-time against MAC schools. The Aztecs started this season 6-1 but have lost four of five games, including their last three. Ohio: Making its 10th bowl appearance in 14 seasons under coach Frank Solich.

Last time: First meeting.

Bowl history: San Diego State: 14 bowl appearances overall (5-8). Ohio: 12th bowl appearance overall (3-8).



JAC C. HONG/AP

Eagles linebacker Kamu Grugier-Hill, left, forces a fumble by Rams quarterback Jared Goff during the second half on Sunday. The Los Angeles offense was not effective for the second straight week.

McVay: Signs of turnaround despite second straight loss

By DAN GREENSPAN

Associated Press

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. — Losing consecutive games for the first time as coach of the Los Angeles Rams hasn't dampened Sean McVay's sense of humor.

McVay joked he hasn't paid attention to the media coverage of Sunday night's 30-23 loss to the Philadelphia Eagles "because I don't want you guys to hurt my feelings."

Instead, McVay is concerned with getting the Rams out of their first prolonged slump in his two seasons.

"You know you have a say in that this story is not finalized," McVay said Monday night. "They don't end the season after 14 games. And we know for sure that we have got two left in this regular season and one playoff game. What we don't know is when that playoff game is going to be. We do know it's going to be at the Coliseum, and that's all we're guaranteed right now."

McVay believes the Rams (11-3) showed signs of a turnaround by giving themselves a chance to tie the game on the final play, an incomplete pass by Jared Goff for Josh Reynolds. Goff was 17-for-23 passing for 179 yards in the fourth quarter against the Eagles after going 55-for-108 for 547 yards with one touchdown and seven interceptions in the previous 11 quarters.

What bogged down the offense as the Eagles built a 17-point lead, McVay said, were breakdowns and penalties that put the Rams

'But in spite of all the different things that we went through, you can't say these guys didn't continue to fight, scratch and claw to put ourselves in a position to try to win a game.'

Sean McVay
Rams coach

in difficult down-and-distance situations. The 32-year-old coach was pleased his team still had a chance to win in spite of those issues.

"You could feel that momentum and, really, that clock ran out on us at the end of the game," McVay said. "But in spite of all the different things that we went through, you can't say these guys didn't continue to fight, scratch and claw to put ourselves in a position to try to win a game. Credit to the Eagles for being able to get it done, but we're going to learn from this and we're not going to allow it to define our season. I do believe that and I know that."

Another confidence-booster for McVay is the health of Todd Gurley, who sustained a knee injury against Philadelphia that did not turn out to be serious. McVay said Gurley is dealing with inflammation and will be day-to-day going into the game at Arizona on Sunday. Gurley had 12 carries for 48 yards against the Eagles.

McVay said he would be cautious with Gurley, who leads the NFL with 21 touchdowns and is second in the league in rushing

yards. However, the chance to secure a first-round playoff bid by winning the final two games would factor into whether McVay would use Gurley against the Cardinals (3-11) if he is healthy.

Complicating matters is the shoulder injury Justin Davis sustained against Philadelphia, leaving rookie John Kelly as the only healthy running back on the roster. Davis is also day-to-day, McVay said.

"I think you really just take it one day at a time," McVay said. "These games are important for us. We've got to do a good job of getting ready for a tough division opponent at their place and having a good week of preparation."

Notes: McVay met with CB Marcus Peters, who had a verbal altercation with a fan during the game Sunday. McVay did not say if Peters would face internal discipline. "He knows that we've got to be better in those situations and can't allow whatever's going on, in terms of that dialogue, to affect our ability to be focused on what is going on during the game," McVay said.

NFL

New game plan revives Vikings

Streamlined rushing attack proves beneficial

By Dave Campbell

Associated Press

EAGAN, Minn. — Dalvin Cook took the first-down handoff for Minnesota, sized up the blocking at the line and veered hard to his left.

Miami cornerback Bobby McCain had the angle on him, but Cook won the race to the edge and accelerated up the sideline to reach the end zone untouched for the Vikings on their merry way to a 41-17 victory over the Dolphins.

That 13-yard touchdown run during a 21-point first quarter was a fitting snapshot of a performance by the offense that was as smooth as it's been all season. That play was called to the same side of the field six days earlier in a 21-7 loss at Seattle, when the Vikings were as flat as they've been all year in trying to move the ball.

Against the Seahawks, naturally, the unblocked cornerback tackled Cook for a short gain. Quarterback Kirk Cousins promised Cook on the sideline that night the next time he had the opportunity he'd beat the defender to the perimeter and turn it into a big play.

Sure enough, that's what trans-

pired against the Dolphins, when Cousins looked at Cook in the huddle and said simply, "Make him miss."

The margin between winning and losing in the NFL can be so slim that sometimes for no significant reason a play can be thwarted one week and thrive the next. Cousins has been vocal since the change about his insistence that the struggles were not a product of bad play calls but rather the fault of the players.

"We've got to make the coaches right," Cousins said.

Still, there was a clear boost the Vikings gained from a fresh start under interim offensive coordinator Kevin Stefanski after the firing of John DeFilippo.

With Stefanski calling the plays on Sunday for the first time, there was a concerted effort to follow a streamlined, simplified game plan after the Vikings were held to less than 285 total yards in Seattle for the fourth time in a five-game stretch. They called 40 runs to 23 passes, by far their biggest favor of the ground game of the season.

Coach Mike Zimmer, who'd been critical of DeFilippo last month for what he termed "too much volume" in the playbook



ANDY CLAYTON-KING/AP

Vikings running back Dalvin Cook runs from Dolphins outside linebacker Jerome Baker during the first half on Sunday. Cook ran for 136 yards and two touchdowns in Minnesota's victory.

from week to week, saw some negative effect that had on Cousins. He told his quarterback last week to remember what playing in the backyard in seventh grade felt like.

"You don't run plays. You just play the game," Zimmer said. "I think that's what he needs to do, just play the game and let it unfold."

Stefanski simply used more players, too. Fullback C.J. Ham had 18 snaps, and backup tight ends David Morgan and Tyler Conklin had 23 snaps apiece. Ham and Morgan, who returned from a four-game absence because of

a knee injury, had the key blocks to give Cook his chance to beat the cornerback one-on-one on his first touchdown.

The offensive linemen, too, were at their best in a season that has been a struggle at times for the Vikings up front. Zimmer made the players report for meetings on Monday instead of the typical day off after a late-in-the-year victory, citing a desire to give the offensive linemen an opportunity to enjoy reviewing their performance.

"What we are able to accomplish when we do the right things," Zimmer said.

The bigger-picture reason, of course, to stay at work is the NFC wild-card race. Philadelphia and Washington both won to stay on the heels of the Vikings (7-6-1), who could clinch their spot as soon as next weekend, but could also find themselves eliminated if they don't win their final two games. Keeping that rushing attack going will go a long way toward avoiding that fate.

"These guys believe in me 100 percent, and I believe in them 100 percent," Cook said of his blockers. "So when you've got a group like that, it's a number of positive outcomes."

49ers QB Mullens has proven he belongs in NFL

By Josh Dubow

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — No matter what happens when Jimmy Garoppolo is healthy again and steps back in as starting quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, Nick Mullens has proven there's a place for him somewhere in the NFL.

The former undrafted free agent out of Southern Mississippi who wasn't even deemed worthy enough to invite to the combine in 2017 has been one of the league's more prolific passers since getting his chance to play last month.

"He's shown he can play in this league," 49ers cornerback Richard Sherman said. "I hope we can keep him because teams need a quarterback. This guy's not just playing conservative football, oh man, get the ball in the right places. He's making the right decisions, he's making good throws under pressure. I'd say he's playing like a top-half quarterback in this league. You have guys that are out there right now that are not playing better football than Nick Mullens. He could be a starter for a lot of teams in this football league and we appreciate that we have him and he's playing his tail off for us."



TONY AVELAR/AP

49ers quarterback Nick Mullens ranks third in yards per attempt and sixth in yards passing per game since taking over as starter.

Mullens has built on his record-setting debut against Oakland on Nov. 1, when he went 16-for-22 for 262 yards, three touchdowns and no interceptions for a 151.9 passer rating that was the highest since the merger for a player in his debut with at least 20 attempts.

He took a little step back the following two games in losses to the New York Giants and Tampa Bay before starting to show noticeable improvement in the second half of

a 43-16 loss at Seattle earlier this month.

Mullens followed that up by leading the Niners (4-10) to wins over Denver and Seattle to provide a rare bright spot in an otherwise down season for San Francisco.

"I try to get better every week," Mullens said. "That's definitely the goal. What you do in the past doesn't matter. It's all about what you do today and the next day and the future. It's definitely a goal of

mine to get better every single day. Feel more comfortable out there. Obviously, experience helps. You could say the experience helps and I feel more comfortable. I'm just enjoying playing."

Since taking over as starter, the player once considered too small and with an arm not strong enough for the NFL ranks third in the league in yards per attempt (8.6) and sixth in yards passing per game (292.3).

He fared well against Seattle's strong defense in a 26-23 overtime win on Sunday, completing 20 of 29 passes for 275 yards and one touchdown despite a couple of key drops that prevented him from having even bigger numbers.

"Nick's played very well and he's gotten better as he's gone," coach Kyle Shanahan said Monday. "I thought yesterday was probably Nick's best game, especially the way he finished it in that fourth quarter."

Mullens got his chance when C.J. Beathard was hurt heading into the Raiders game but now has put up better numbers than Garoppolo did in eight starts for San Francisco the past two years before a season-ending knee injury in Week 3.

While Garoppolo will no doubt be the starter next season, Mul-

lens has made his case to be the No. 2 even though Beathard was a fourth-round pick the year Mullens entered as an undrafted player.

"I think I can play in the league, that's for sure. I believe that," Mullens said. "But, as far as the extra stuff goes, I don't really worry too much about it."

Mullens' teammates saw signs that he could perform on the big stage before he even got his chance. He led some late comebacks in preseason games and had a relentless work ethic and attention to detail that he even practiced calling out plays at home with crowd noise blaring through his ear phones.

He also took young receivers under his wing, making sure they knew the offense as well as he did even before he was playing.

"You talk about a young kid who's come in here, learned the offense, was on the practice squad all of last year. He's teaching the young receivers in his class the playbook," kicker Robbie Gould said. "He's really a coach. The kid has got such an incredible story. He finally gets his chance about a year and a half later and he's really taken the reins. He's a true leader. You cheer for guys like Nick Mullens."

NFL

Scoreboard

American Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	5	0	.643	374	310
Miami	7	7	0	.500	295	374
Buffalo	5	9	0	.357	215	333
N.Y. Jets	4	10	0	.286	292	359
Houston	10	4	0	.714	352	281
Indianapolis	8	6	0	.571	372	300
Tennessee	8	6	0	.571	268	254
Jacksonville	4	10	0	.286	225	289
Pittsburgh	8	5	1	.607	384	316
Baltimore	8	6	1	.571	341	253
Cleveland	6	7	1	.464	309	348
Cincinnati	6	8	0	.429	337	413
x-Kansas City	11	3	0	.786	499	380
L.A. Chargers	9	5	0	.643	386	298
Denver	6	8	0	.429	306	299
Oakland	3	11	0	.214	260	418

National Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	8	6	0	.571	276	269
Philadelphia	7	7	0	.500	311	318
Washington	10	4	0	.714	366	310
N.Y. Giants	5	9	0	.357	307	348
y-New Orleans	12	2	0	.857	459	292
Carolina	6	8	0	.429	233	344
Atlanta	5	9	0	.357	356	381
Tampa Bay	5	9	0	.357	344	403
y-Chicago	10	4	0	.714	383	264
Minnesota	7	6	1	.538	323	308
Green Bay	5	8	1	.393	332	331
Detroit	5	9	0	.357	284	353
y-L.A. Rams	11	3	0	.786	448	343
Seattle	8	6	0	.571	363	292
San Francisco	4	10	0	.286	301	373
Arizona	3	11	0	.214	192	367

x-clinched playoff spot
y-clinched division

Thursday's games
L.A. Chargers 29, Kansas City 28

Saturday's games
Houston 29, N.Y. Jets 22

Sunday's games
Baltimore 20, Tampa Bay 12

Washington 16, Jacksonville 13

Indianapolis 23, Dallas 0

Buffalo 14, Detroit 13

Chicago 24, Green Bay 17

Minnesota 41, Miami 17

Tennessee 17, N.Y. Giants 0

Atlanta 40, Arizona 14

Cincinnati 30, Oakland 16

Pittsburgh 17, New England 10

San Francisco 26, Seattle 23

Philadelphia 30, L.A. Rams 23

New Orleans 12, Carolina 9

Saturday, Dec. 22
Washington at Tennessee

Baltimore at L.A. Chargers

Sunday, Dec. 23
Atlanta at Carolina

Philadelphia at Pittsburgh

N.Y. Giants at Indianapolis

Green Bay at N.Y. Jets

Minnesota at Detroit

Buffalo at New England

Cincinnati at Cleveland

Jacksonville at Miami

Tampa Bay at Dallas

L.A. Rams at Arizona

San Francisco at Seattle

Pittsburgh at New Orleans

Kansas City at Seattle

Monday, Dec. 24
Denver at Oakland

Monday

Saints 12, Panthers 9

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New Orleans	3	3	0	.500	2-9	2-9
Carolina	0	0	0	.000	0-0	0-0

First quarter

Car—Manhertz 50 pass from McCar-

frey (Gonzalez kick), 4:02.

NO—FG Lutz 46, 2:16.

Second quarter

NO—FG Lutz 24, 9:56.

Fourth quarter

NO—Kamara 16 run (pass failed),

12:12.

A—74,188.

First downs

Total Net Yards

Rushes-yards

Passing

Punt Returns

Kickoff Returns

Interceptions Ret.

Comp-Ath-Int

Sacked-Yards Lost

Penalties-Yards

Fumbles-Lost

Punt-Yards

Time of Possession

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—New Orleans, Kamara 16,

Ingram 12-63, THill 1-17, Lewis 2-6,

Lewis 1-4, Brees 2-(minus 2), Carolina,

McCoy 15-53, Ingram 1-22, C-Newton

5:15, Samuel 2-8.

PASSING—New Orleans, Brees 23-35-

12-03, Carolina, C-Newton 16-29-11,31,

McCoy 16-40-52.

RECEIVING—New Orleans, M.Thomas

7-49, Kamara 7-36, Kirkwood 2-40, Hill

2-24, T.Criffin 2-19, Ingram 2-11, Watson

1-28, Carolina, McCaffrey 8-67, Wright 3-

14, McCoy 2-14, Moore 2-12, Manhertz

1-50, Samuel 1-17.

Calendar

Dec. 30—Regular season ends.

Jan. 5-6—Wild-card playoff round.

Jan. 12-13—Divisional playoff round.

Is it time to sit ailing Newton?

Carolina must make decision

By STEVE REED
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — It's come to the point in the season where the Carolina Panthers must make the difficult decision of whether or not to sit Cam Newton.

With the postseason a longshot at best following a six-game losing streak and the former league MVP seemingly unable to throw the ball more than 20 yards down the field due to a lingering shoulder injury, coach Ron Rivera may weigh the benefits of shutting down Newton for the rest of the season.

"I'm not looking forward to that conversation," Newton said after Carolina's 12-9 loss to the Saints.

Newton has been limited in practice for the better part of the season, often not throwing at all on Wednesdays and Thursdays during the week so he can rest the shoulder. His timing is off with his receivers and he doesn't have the same zip on the ball as he did when he led the Panthers to the Super Bowl in 2015 and combined for 45 touchdowns.

He said he doesn't know exactly what the issue is with his shoulder — only that it's not getting better or worse.

He mentioned the possibility of it being the labrum or the rotator cuff, which he had repaired in March 2017. In the meantime, he's been taking anti-inflammatories, getting massages and trying acupuncture. He said there hasn't been a night that's gone by without having some type of work done on his shoulder.

Nothing is working.

FROM BACK PAGE

Brees likes that the Saints have found many different ways to win, even though not all of them have been pretty. The 12 points against the Panthers marked the fewest for New Orleans in a victory since 1998.

For most of the season the Saints relied on an electrifying offense, scoring 40 points or more six times. But recently it is the defense that has stepped up to make big plays.

"There's a lot to be said for that — finding ways to win," Brees said. "Battle tested. These last two weeks, we've had to win in the fourth quarter, had to come back and win in the fourth quarter. On the road, divisional games, those are going to be hard-fought. Those are going to be tough and the great team will find a way. Our guys believe we're all going to step up, we're going to do this to-



Mike McCann/AP

Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton, left, scrambles past the New Orleans Saints' Tyeler Davison, center, during the first half of Monday's game in Charlotte, N.C.

Without a diagnosis, Newton has just kept on playing.

"I've been eager to find out for weeks and weeks what it is," Newton said. "Did you find something? What am I supposed to do? What do I have to do? It's a lot of soreness and tension in the joint."

He previously mentioned the

possibility of surgery in the off-season, but was non-committal on Monday night.

Rivera said after the game he'll likely head into next week's game against Atlanta — which is essentially meaningless in terms of the postseason — the same way he has the previous 14 games. He'll

evaluate Newton's status later in the week after meeting with team doctors.

"I'm not going to guess as to what he's going through," Rivera said. "I would never do that. The young man is a courageous guy who fights and tries to do the best he can for us."

Tested: Late, defense has been carrying New Orleans

“Our guys believe we’re all going to step up, we’re going to do this together, somebody’s going to make a play.”

Drew Brees

Saints quarterback, on low-scoring games the past two weeks

gether, somebody's going to make a play."

The Saints didn't make a lot of plays Monday, but they made enough.

There was Eli Apple's interception of Cam Newton's pass in the end zone with 10 seconds left before halftime. There was Von Bell's strip of wide receiver D.J. Moore on an inside handoff and A.J. Klein's recovery, which led to the go-ahead score. There were four players who sacked Newton — and none were named Cam Jordan. Alvin Kamara had a 50-

yard kickoff return.

The little plays all add up.

"We are playing hard and playing for each other," Apple said.

Unlike some of the NFL's other top teams — namely, the Rams and Chiefs — the Saints found a way to grind it out without their "A" game on offense this week.

It didn't matter that the offense failed to gain more than 30 yards on seven of its first eight drives. It didn't matter because New Orleans could count on its defense.

Jordan called it the best he's ever played on.

"I believe in us, game in and game out, first quarter to fourth quarter," Jordan said. "If it comes down to a crucial play, I believe in us. If we need a turnover, I believe in us."

New Orleans has already wrapped up the NFC South title and can clinch home-field advantage throughout the playoffs with a victory in either of its last two games, both at home, against Pittsburgh and Carolina.

Looking for their second Super Bowl championship in a decade, the well-rounded Saints might just be the favorites heading into the postseason.

"We were just trying to stack weeks because you know you want to play your best ball in December," said Bell, who also had seven tackles and a sack. "That's what people remember and going into this last stretch we wanted to finish strong."

SPORTS



Duck season

Anaheim wins for ninth time in 10 games » **NHL, Page 28**

NFL

The New Orleans Saints' Michael Thomas, right, and the Carolina Panthers' James Bradberry grab each other's face masks during the second half of Monday's game in Charlotte, N.C.

Jason E. Miczek/AP



Mike McCann/AP

Panthers quarterback Cam Newton, right, is sacked by Saints linebacker Demario Davis during the first half. The Saints sacked Newton four times.

Battle tested

Saints grinding out tough wins

By STEVE REED
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — On a night when the high-powered offense was stuck in neutral, the New Orleans Saints still found a way to grind out a 12-9 win over Carolina behind their ever-improving defense.

That could bode well for these Saints (12-2) as they prepare to make a run at the Super Bowl.

For years, they've relied on star quarterback Drew Brees to score a lot of points, put up big yardage and win games for them. But suddenly

the Saints have a defense that is not only keeping them close when the offense sputters, but might be one of the best in the NFL. New Orleans has not allowed more than 17 points in any of its last six games.

"That's what the great teams find a way to do," said Brees, who was limited to 203 yards passing and intercepted once Monday night. "Despite what happens in the first three quarters or maybe the mistakes that were made prior to that, they just make the plays you need to make to win the game."

SEE TESTED ON PAGE 31

Inside: Solid rushing attack revives Vikings' offense, Page 30

Antetokounmpo leads Bucks past Pistons » **NBA, Page 26**

